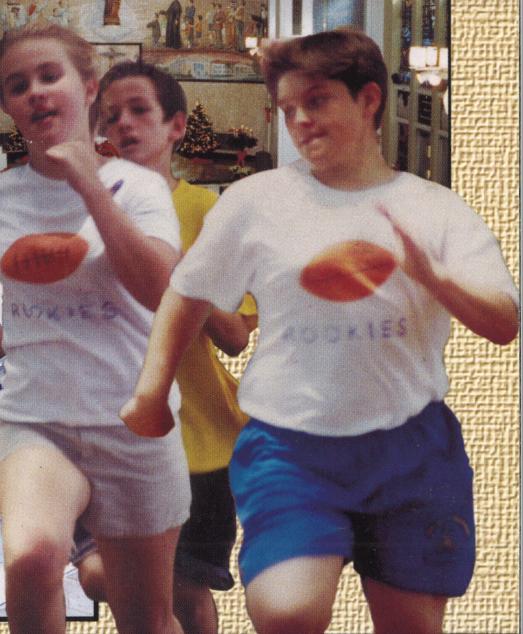
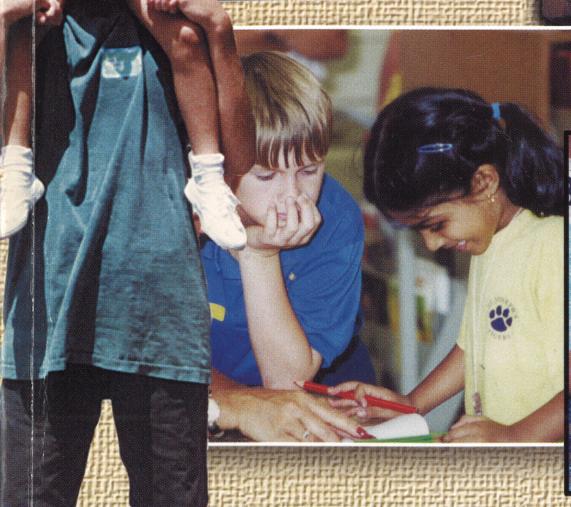




MARY HELP of CHRISTIANS SCHOOL



75th Anniversary Celebration

Congratulations

**To Mary Help of Christians School in Tampa, Florida
on its 75th Anniversary**



**1200 So. Ocean Boulevard
Pompano Beach, Florida 33062**

(305) 941-7830

Direct 1-800-231-2423

Fax (305)942-7680

Owners - Alumnus

Ron Russell, Jr., 1970-1974

Charles Russell, 1976-1977

Mary Help of Christians School

75th Anniversary Souvenir Program

1928 – 2003

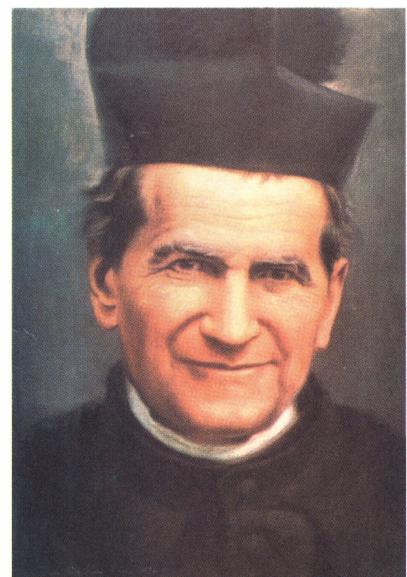
“A Wish to Build a Dream On”



*Dedicated to
Mrs. Alicia Gonzalez Neve,
Foundress of this school
and God given mother
of countless boys.*



*Mary Help of Christians is a
Catholic co-ed middle school
administered by the
Salesians of St. John Bosco.*



Proclamation



PAM IORIO, MAYOR

WHEREAS, Mary Help of Christians School was founded in 1928 by priests and brothers of the Salesian Order in Tampa as an orphanage and school for homeless boys; and

WHEREAS, thousands of boys and (since 2000) girls have prospered educationally as a result of attending Mary Help of Christians School; and

WHEREAS, Mary Help of Christians School has remained a home-like school throughout its 75 years as a Tampa Bay area resource and will continue to grow and prosper in the years to come thanks to the support of the Salesian community in the Eastern United States; and

WHEREAS, the City of Tampa gratefully acknowledges the positive impact the Salesian community and Mary Help of Christians School have had on the youth of our area and congratulates the many priests, brothers and lay staff who, through the years, have provided each student with a quality education and a moral foundation in their lives.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Pam Iorio, by virtue of the authority vested in me as Mayor of the City of Tampa, Florida, do hereby proclaim November 15, 2003 as

"MARY HELP OF CHRISTIANS SCHOOL DAY"

in the City of Tampa, Florida, and urge all citizens to join me in acknowledging their 75TH anniversary and in thanking all those who have played such a vital role in its history.

Dated in Tampa, Florida, this 15th day of November, 2003.

Handwritten signature of Pam Iorio over a horizontal line, with "Mayor" written below it.





Salesians of Don Bosco

148 MAIN STREET, P.O. BOX 639 • NEW ROCHELLE, NEW YORK 10802 • (914) 636-4225
OFFICE OF THE PROVINCIAL

October 24, 2003

Reverend William Ferruzzi, SDB
Director
Mary Help of Christians School
6400 East Chelsea Street
Tampa, FL 33610-5699

Reverend and Dear Father Bill,

I write to convey to you and all involved my best wishes and prayers as Mary Help of Christians School celebrates its 75th Anniversary.

We remember its founding through the generosity of Mrs. Alicia Neve. We commemorate the hard work of so many Salesians, priests and brothers, who over the years have loved the young with hearts like the Good Shepherd's. We honor the generous assistance of lay collaborators, Salesian Cooperators and benefactors who have sustained a real miracle of charity.

As we celebrate this milestone in the life of this Salesian school, we pray that God may forgive any bad of these years and multiply the good. And we commit ourselves to ongoing selfless and authentic service of the young in the manner of our Father, Saint John Bosco.

Imparting the blessing of Mary, Help of Christians, I remain

James E. Heuser

Very Rev. James E. Heuser, SDB
Provincial

The Salesian Society was formed by Don Bosco, and is now the third largest Catholic religious order in the world. It was named after St. Francis de Sales who was known for his kind and gentle manner, a trait which Don Bosco wanted his Salesians to acquire. He also chose Mary, Help of Christians, as the patroness of the Salesian Society.



Very Reverend James E. Heuser, SDB,
Provincial of the New Rochelle Province

Former Provincials

V. Rev. Michael Borghino	1902-1908
V. Rev. Michael Foglino	1908-1911
V. Rev. Ernest Coppo	1911-1919
V. Rev. Emmanuel Manassero	1919-1927
V. Rev. Richard Pittini	1927-1933
V. Rev. Ambrose Rossi	1933-1941
V. Rev. Eneas Tozzi	1941-1944
V. Rev. Ernest Giovannini	1944-1958
V. Rev. Felix Penna	1958-1961
V. Rev. August Bosio	1961-1967
V. Rev. John J. Malloy	1967-1973
V. Rev. Salvatore Isgro	1973-1979
V. Rev. Dominic DeBlase	1979-1985
V. Rev. Richard McCormick	1985-1991
V. Rev. Timothy C. Ploch	1991-1997
V. Rev. Patrick Angelucci	1997-2003

The Salesians can be found worldwide in many different initiatives on behalf of young people: schools, oratories, youth centers, technical and professional training centers, parishes, foreign missions, and activities in the realm of mass media and social communications.





Early Mary Help students with Don Bosco statue on the school grounds in Tampa, Florida

Don Bosco proposed to carry out his mission using the system of the Gospel, based on love and respect. He lived and worked during the latter part of the 19th Century. His work started in Turin, Italy and is now established across the world.

St. John Bosco, the friend of youth, founder of the Salesians who staff Mary Help, was one of those extraordinary men whom God sends into the world to fulfill a particular mission when a critical need arises.



Current Mary Help students with our Director, Father Bill Ferruzzi



DIOCESE
OF ST. PETERSBURG
Office Of The Bishop

November 15, 2003

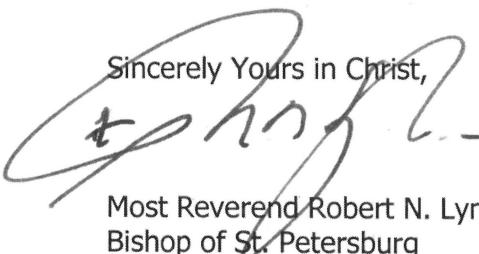
To all friends of Mary Help of Christians School,

I wish to extend to you every good wish and blessing on the occasion of the seventy-fifth anniversary of Mary Help of Christians. Blessed by God and protected by the mother of His Son, Mary Help of Christians has served the Church, the diocese of St. Petersburg, and the Salesian Community for all those years.

As a residential school and now as a middle school, the unique charism of St. John Bosco remains at the heart of the school's mission and life. The wonderful mixture of faith and good discipline over the years has given to the Church of this moment wonderful leaders.

With regrets that I am unable to be present with you tonight in thanking God for these past seventy-five years but assuring you of my constant gratitude to the Salesian Community of St. John Bosco and the staff and student body of Mary Help of Christians, I remain

Sincerely Yours in Christ,


Most Reverend Robert N. Lynch
Bishop of St. Petersburg



Mary Help of Christians School

6400 East Chelsea Street
Tampa, Florida 33610
(813) 626-6191

November 15, 2003

Dear Friend of Mary Help,

While I have only been Director at Mary Help for a short time, it has not taken long to see the love that is felt for our school. Our students, alumni and parents, along with the thousands of friends of Mary Help share a tremendous dedication to our success! It is a privilege to be with you as we share the milestone of 75 years of Excellence in Education.

The theme we have chosen for our 75th Anniversary celebration – “A Wish to Build a Dream On” – touches on the most important part of our work here at Mary Help. We came together as a family in 1928 to provide educational opportunities for needy children. These boys, some knowing only poverty and hardship, dreamed of the opportunity to learn new skills and build a better life. Seventy-five years later many things have changed at Mary Help, but our goal remains the same. We strive to help our girls and boys achieve their dreams by providing them with quality education, moral and spiritual guidance and a strong sense of individuality and self-worth.

It is the true Christian community that has developed around Mary Help that makes all our good works possible. We are especially grateful for the support our friends and benefactors have given Mary Help throughout the past seventy five years. These gifts, along with the spiritual and emotional support, have helped many children reach goals they may never have dreamed possible.

This anniversary celebration allows us to give thanks to Almighty God for the many blessings He has provided for us. We pray that He continues to smile upon our work for the children.

Gratefully,

Fr. Bill Ferruzzi, SDB

Fr. Bill Ferruzzi, SDB
Director, Mary Help of Christians School

Directors Mary Help of Christians School

Tampa, Florida
1928 – Present

Rev. Rinaldo Bergamo, SDB
1928 – 1929

Rev. Alvin Fedrigotti, SDB
1929 – 1932

Rev. Louis Rinaldi, SDB
1932 – 1941

Rev. Dominic Battistello, SDB
1941 – 1947

Rev. Joseph Kormann, SDB
1947 – 1950

Rev. Emil Fardellone, SDB
1950 – 1956

Rev. August Bosio, SDB
1956 – 1961

Rev. Alvin Manni, SDB
1961 – 1965

Rev. Vincent Duffy, SDB
1965 – 1966

Rev. Alvin Manni, SDB
1966 – 1967

Rev. Vincent Duffy, SDB
1967 – 1971

Rev. Alvin Manni, SDB
1971 – 1974

Rev. James Jeffcoat, SDB
1974 – 1976

Rev. August Kita, SDB
1976 – 1981

Rev. Bernard Justen, SDB
1981 – 1983

Rev. Steven Dumais, SDB
1983 – 1989

Rev. Dominic DeBlase, SDB
1989 – 1991

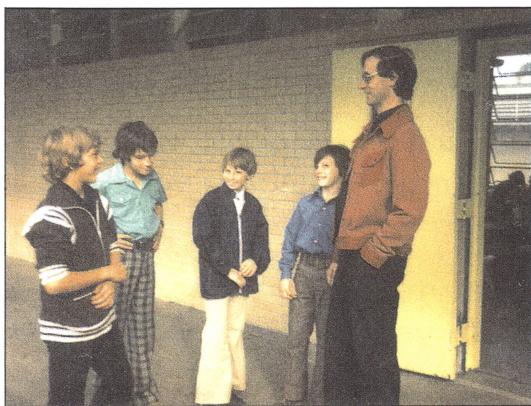
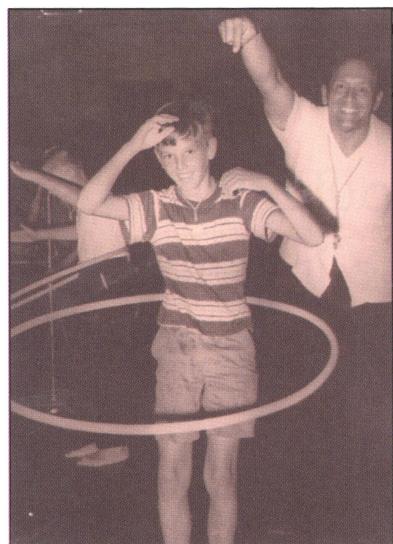
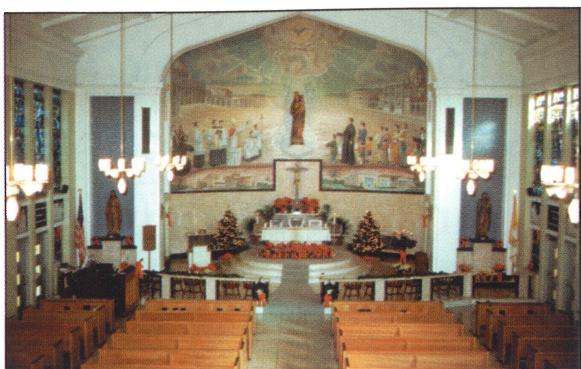
Rev. James Mulloy, SDB
1991 – 1994

Rev. Frank Wolfram, SDB
1994 – 1997

Rev. William Keane,
SDB
1997 – 2003

Rev. William Ferruzzi,
SDB
2003 – present





Silent Auction Sponsors

We would like to extend a special “Thank You” to all the individuals and businesses who donated items or services for our Silent Auction.

Brandon Mower
Mower Service (\$40 value)

Beef O’Brady’s (Seffner)
Gift Certificate (\$25 value)

Beef O’Brady’s (Brandon)
Gift Basket (\$35 value)

Brandon Center Place /
Claudia Yak
Membership Basket (\$50 value)

Dr. Gregory Cagle, O.D.
One Free Eye Exam (\$54 value)

Campbell’s Dairyland
Two Dinner Baskets (\$12 value)

Coca-Cola Bottling Company
Four Tampa Bay Lightning Tickets
(\$250 value)

Einstein Bros Bagels
Two certificates for 12 months of free
bagels (\$130 value)

Eva’s Cakes and More
Two gift certificates for cakes (\$25
value)

Colleen Frasca
Certificate for free facial (\$75 value)

Georggi’s Menswear
Gift Certificate (\$75 value)

George Kiefer U.S.F.
Soccer Camp
One Week Camp (\$100 value)

Latin Cuisine
Dinner Gift Certificate (\$30 value)

Lively Automotive (Brandon)
Oil Change & Lube Certificate (\$20 value)

The Olde World Cheese Shop
Wine and Cheese Basket (\$65 value)

McCormick Water Ski School
Four certificates for lessons (\$35 each)

Outback Steak House
Two Dinner Gift Certificates (\$45 each)

Palifox Carpet Cleaners
Carpet Cleaning (\$75 value)

Palmer House Bed & Breakfast
One night stay (\$129 value)

Julie Pearson
Southern Living at Home Gift Certificate
(\$25 value)

Pewter Report
One year subscription to the Pewter
Report, plus two Florida Orchestra Ticket
Exchange Passes (\$125 value)

Rainbow Rivers Club
One Year Free Membership (\$500 value)

Ritz Camera
Five Picture enlargement certificates
(\$40 value)

Spirit FM 90.5
"Guest DJ" with Eli Spade on Kid's
Kingdom (\$100 value)

Strike and Spare Fun Centers
Bowling Basket (bowling ball, two
shirts and a family party certificate)
(\$125 value)

Sunshine School Uniforms
Two Gift Certificates (\$50 each)

St. Francis of Assisi
Catholic Church
Wilson football autographed by FSU
Football Coach Bobby Bowden (\$200
value)

Rawlings football autographed by
Miami Hurricanes Football Coach
Larry Coker (\$175 value)

Wilson baseball glove autographed by
former NY Yankee and Baseball Hall
of Famer Whitey Ford (\$200 value)

Baseball autographed by former
Cleveland Indian and Baseball Hall of
Famer Bob Feller (\$250 value)



Talbots Clothing Store
Angel Pin (\$50 value)

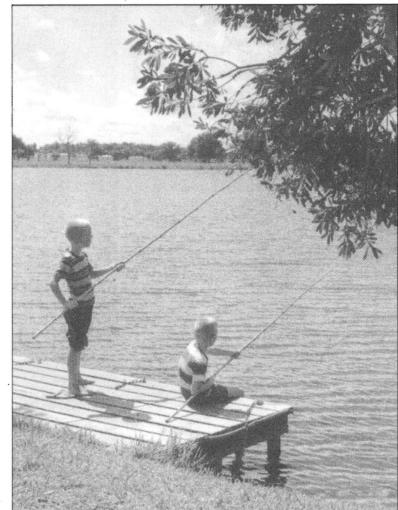
Tampa Bay Lightning/St. Pete
Times Forum
Two Tampa Bay Lightning Tickets (\$100
value)

Tampa Bay Performing Art Center
Four tickets to "A Christmas Carol" (\$120
value)

Tender Thoughts Florist
Monthly flowers or gift for one year
(\$275 value)

University of South Florida
Two tickets to USF football game
(vs. UAB on 11/22/03) (\$50 value)

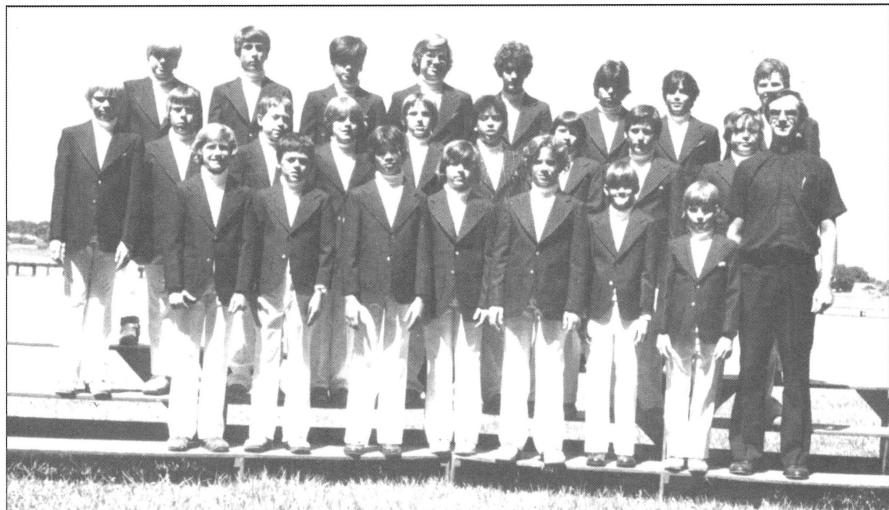
Dr. Harold B. Welch III
\$500 in free dental work





**Mary Help of Christians
award-winning band and
chorus brought fame to
the school.**







A Brief History of Mary Help of Christians School

“Of all good works the most excellent is the Christians education of youth.” — Don Bosco

Early in his childhood, St. John Bosco had a dream. In his dream, he was asked to lead a group of unruly children using trust, gentleness and persuasion, but no violence. This dream developed into a religious vocation, and Don Bosco told his mother, beloved Mama Margaret, “If I can get ordained one day, I shall devote my life to children... I will give them good advice, and spend my whole life for the salvation of their souls.” This calling led Don Bosco to fulfill his most fervent wish: to build schools that served as sanctuaries for impoverished and troubled youth, providing spiritual, educational and emotional guidance.

Many years later, halfway around the world in Tampa, Florida, Mrs. Alicia Neve also had a dream. Her dream was to help needy boys that wished for a better life, but had nowhere to go and no one to turn to. As Don Bosco was the *Orphanorum Pater*, or Father of Orphans, Ms. Neve was to become the mother of countless needy children in Tampa.

A saintly Jesuit priest had once assured Mrs. Neve that she would have many children. Yet she was childless when her husband died. Left with a substantial estate, she did not want the poor boys of Tampa to wait until her death to benefit from her inheritance. Moved by the life story of St. John Bosco, she decided that Don Bosco’s Salesian Order was the most suitable, because the Priests and Brothers devoted themselves solely to the welfare of homeless boys. She conferred with Father Emmanuele Manassero, the Salesian Provincial at the time, and offered the Salesians her forty acres on East Lake and the necessary funds to build a school building for needy boys:

Very Reverend Father,

Your (letter) of the tenth ... has been duly received and read with joy, because I consider it the first step toward the realization of my plans for the benefit of poor little orphan boys. I judge from your letter that you would like me to put my offer in writing. It is as follows:

I have a tract of forty acres, six miles from Tampa, about six of which are in young orange trees. This tract is on the edge of a small lake, three or four acres, perhaps a little more, being in the lake. There is a good size barn, and the necessary agricultural implements, also two horses.

The land is cleared, and I have used a portion of it for raising the hay needed for the horses. I thought an orphanage and industrial school for boys could be established on this tract, and for this purpose, I will donate to you the whole forty acres, with all the equipment I have there. To help support this, I will give to you a two story brick building on the corner of Franklin and Hillsborough Streets, or the proceeds of the sale of such building... If it is sold, I will turn over to you all the proceeds of the sale, as payments are made, making whatever documents may be necessary to assure you the amount the building may bring. My lawyer Hon. H.P. Baya and others assure me that this property is worth one hundred and fifty thousand dollars now...

I told you that I would be glad to pay the expenses of your trip to this city for the purpose of investigating my offer, and, therefore, I am enclosing my check for two hundred dollars.

I have tried to make my proposal as clear as possible, but I imagine there may be many points, concerning which you may require more detailed information. I believe, however, that this will be much more easily done after you arrive here.

Awaiting the pleasure of seeing you in Tampa, and recommending myself and my project to your valued prayers, I remain,
Very respectfully yours,

Alicia M. Neve
Tampa, Florida

And so it was in October of 1927 that ground was broken for the school that would become home to countless children. These children would grow and prosper through the teachings of the Salesians in an environment of reason, religion and kindness, allowing them to develop spiritually, intellectually, emotionally, physically and socially.

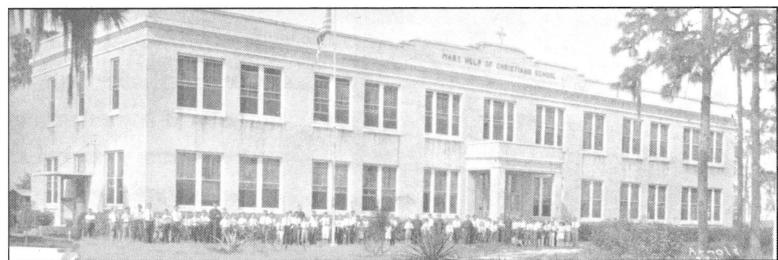
Mary Help of Christians School was dedicated on the Feast of Christ the King in October 1928. The Holy Father, Pius XI, cabled his paternal blessing, and the third successor of St. John Bosco, Blessed Philip Rinaldi, sent a most affectionate message and a gold medal, which was presented to Mrs. Alicia M. Neve as a token of appreciation.

Father Rinaldo Bergamo, who may be called the founder of the Salesian work in Florida, was the school's first director while at the same time functioning as pastor of Our Lady of Mercy Church. (Presently this parish is called Our Lady of Perpetual Help and is run by the Marists.) The first boys learned about Don Bosco from Fr. Bergamo.

The second Director of the school was Fr. Alvin Fedrigotti. He served only three short years (1929 - 1932). Still he was able to start a tradition that would make Mary Help of Christians School known throughout Florida. Fr. Alvin was an accomplished musician and composer. To start a brass band, he appealed to Mrs. Amelia Hardin, of St. Augustine, Florida. She responded with money to buy instruments. In November 1931 with Fr. Alvin as bandmaster, eighteen boys



Mary Help of Christians was dedicated on the Feast of Christ, the King in October 1928.



A rare picture of the original administration building.



In the fall of
1932, Mary Help
embarked on
what it fondly
terms its
“Golden Age.”



Neve Hall after renovation.

began to learn how to play using *Emil Ascher's Beginner's Band Book*. In two months the band was able to play twenty pieces. The band also underwent marching drills and in 1933 they marched in a parade in Ybor City.

Somewhere around 1929 a providential incident took place. Mary Help was started during the depression and was not immune to the troubles of the time. Many times food supplies were low. One day the Director asked the boys to go to the chapel around 11:00 A.M. There was no food in the house. The boys were asked to pray so that God would provide something for them no matter how small. While they were in chapel, a truck pulled up to the kitchen and unloaded its contents. The boys had received enough food to last several weeks.

Mary Help of Christians School held its first graduation exercises on June 28, 1931. Bishop Patrick Berry of St. Augustine presided and presented diplomas to the five graduates. Caps and gowns were not worn. Mr. A. P. Baya, the school's lawyer, addressed the graduates. Four of the graduates opted to attend high school at Don Bosco Seminary, in Newton, New Jersey.

When Fr. Louis Rinaldi, nephew of the same sainted Father Philip Rinaldi, was appointed director in the fall of 1932, Mary Help embarked on what it fondly terms its “Golden Age.” The number of boys reached an incredible number. All rooms available had to be put at the service of the ever-larger number of newcomers. Even the first aid station, the library and the priests' own private quarters were used to provide a bed and a chair, not much else, as the stark poverty of those early years — they were the depression years — made it impossible to provide much more for the homeless boys. However the boys did have a home. They had a real home because they had a loving father, Father Rinaldi, a loving mother, Mrs. Neve, and a small group of dedicated Salesian priests and brothers who shared their life and gave themselves to their service, not out of hire but out of dedicated love.

Miniature shops for the boys' vocational training soon made their appearance and the boys began to learn trades as cabinetmakers, printers, bookbinders, shoe repairmen and young agriculturists.

Boys began coming to Mary Help not only from Tampa, but also from every part of the Sunshine State. When they came they hardly expected to find themselves rowing on their own private lake, surrounded by palm trees and orange groves. The lake on which Mary Help borders was first called “Lake Bellows” because of the number of alligators bellowing at night, then “Lake Lee.” Now it is simply known as East Lake.

In 1938, the tenth anniversary of Mary Help of Christians School, the Anna Pitsch Memorial Building was completed. This building added a large dormitory space, cafeteria and classrooms to the original building, now aptly called “Neve Hall.” The new building was bold in both design and structure. The spacious dormitory housed over 100 children, included private showers and toilet facilities and had windows on all sides to let in the Florida sunshine and catch the seasonal breezes. The building also comprised a new cafeteria and kitchen on the bottom floor, as well as two large homerooms that housed little scholars during the school day.

Like the original building, this structure was designed and built by the W. I. Sultenfuss building company, who not only built with professional competence,

but who also scrupulously avoided every waste and gave the boys their best for the least money. Mary Help owes the Sultenfuss family and their company a great debt of gratitude.

This very important new construction was made possible by a bequest from a very generous soul, and was another sign of Mary's protection and Her Son's intercession for Mary Help. The donor, Mr. Gustav Pitsch, was not of the Catholic faith and had come as an immigrant to our land from Germany. Hard work and thrift had helped him accumulate a good fortune. He and his wife, Anna, used to vacation every year in Tampa from their home in Grantwood, New Jersey. Mary Help is built on a location of Hillsborough County where the ground rises to a higher level than elsewhere. Hence, most of the area's cemeteries were also near the school. During one of their weekly walks, a group of our boys chanced by Myrtle Hill Cemetery, a mile from the school, where they noticed a freshly covered grave. The Salesian Brother who was with them invited them to say a prayer for the recently deceased who had been laid to rest there. Unbeknown to them, Mr. Gustav Pitsch was standing behind a tree grieving over his lost wife who had just been interred. What he saw and the prayers he heard touched him deeply. When he died, Mary Help became heir to his hard-earned fortune and the Anna Pitsch Memorial Building was erected.

The buildings and the work of the school grew over the years. In 1941, through the generosity of the late Mrs. Hardin, the dream of larger and better shops became a reality when four new shop buildings were completed.

Fr. Dominic Battistello succeeded Fr. Louis Rinaldi as Director at Mary Help. He took over during the difficult period of the Second World War. During his administration, in spite of war restrictions he managed to further increase the number of boys.

In 1947 Fr. Joseph Korman took over as Director. During this time, the school continued to grow. A larger tract of land was added to the property, and a new grove was planted. His spirit of true and unselfish poverty and love for the boys made him an example to all and attracted many more friends to our school. During his term the Mama Margaret Guild purchased new uniforms for the band, which were still wearing uniforms made during the Depression.

After Fr. Korman's term as director, Fr. Emil Fardellone, a native New Yorker, joined Mary Help of Christians School. The school, along with the rest of the state, was entering a new era. The population boom of Florida in the post-war years was unprecedented, and the reasons for it must be placed both on the experience and knowledge that hundreds of thousands of young GIs acquired while doing their stint in the military in Florida's beautiful and balmy weather, and, believe it or not, to the invention of the air conditioner. Later on, in the early 1960's, during Frs. Manni's and Duffy's administration came the Cuban exodus that added another substantial number of hard-working and highly motivated people to Florida's population.

During Father Emil's term of office, a heating system was installed in the school and forty additional acres of land were added to the campus. The gymnasium was completed in 1956 and dedicated in October of that year. Father Emil was also responsible for the start of a full Senior High School program at the

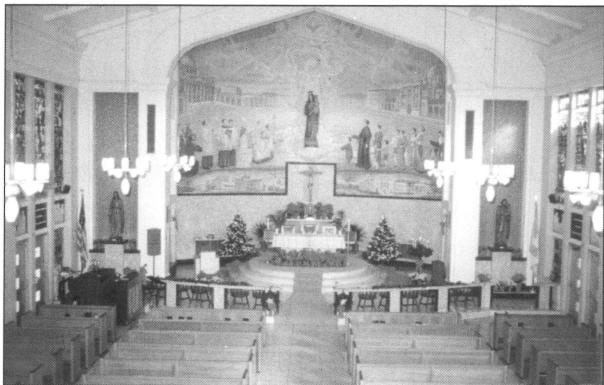


The Anna Pitsch Memorial Building



**The school,
along with the rest
of the state
of Florida, was
entering a
new era.**





Mary Help of Christians Shrine

school, which lasted until 1959.

Our beloved Mrs. Alicia Neve, whom hundreds of boys had called Mother, passed away serenely, poor in human resources — only a few hundred dollars were left in her account to take care of the funeral expenses — but rich and laden with merits before God. Her spirit still lives on at Mary Help.

To succeed Father Emil came Father August Bosio, who had served as a teaching brother under Father Rinaldi. He had vast plans of expansion for the school. In March 1958 he turned over the first spade of dirt in the ground-breaking ceremonies of a new classroom wing now known as Savio Hall. Day students were admitted for the first time, to give the resident boys a greater

feeling of normalcy, rubbing shoulders with boys from neighboring homes. Under his directorship the printing shop equipment was upgraded, allowing the first color printing at the school, and a new machine shop was opened, dedicated to the loving memory of Father Louis Rinaldi.

During the 1950s the enrollment reached a record high of 194. Things were beginning to really get complicated and crowded in various places, especially the chapel where Mass and Benediction took place for the boys each day. Plans for a new chapel were first conceived in 1938 at the dedication of the Anna Pitsch Memorial Building. A young Fr. Peter Rinaldi had written in a dedication booklet for the day, "Our present chapel, devout and beautiful though it be, is too small... A structure that will comfortably seat not only our boys, but also a goodly number of friends visiting us on our annual festivals, is a very pressing necessity..." The slate was finally cleared in the early 1960's so that attention could be given to building a chapel worthy of the name Mary Help of Christians. Fr. Alvin Manni was the new Director who saw it through. Ground was broken in 1963. Work was continued until 1964 when the corner stone was laid and the church began to be used, even unfinished. After all the decorations, furniture and painting had been finished, the chapel was dedicated on January 31, 1966. This shrine is considered by many to be one of the best in the whole state of Florida.

Father Vincent Duffy, who had previously served as "Prefect of Studies," a term used then to describe the office of Dean of Discipline and Studies, took over as Director in 1965. The automotive shop was improved and enlarged. A tract of land behind our shops was acquired, thus ensuring a perpetual "band of green" around our school as well as more pasture for the cattle kept on the land. Also during this administration, our Olympic size swimming pool was constructed. Most of the cost was paid for by a legacy from the Malinowski family, after whom the pool was named.

In 1971 Father Manni returned as Director of Mary Help. His arrival gave impetus and put to completion the work started for the accreditation of our school by the St. Petersburg Diocesan Board. Needless to say, Mary Help received the much sought for accreditation with a "superior" rating.

During Father Manni's administration, we came to the help of the St. Petersburg Diocese which was experiencing serious growing pains. For three years, Mary Help opened up its facilities to Tampa Catholic High School, taking in an additional 250 freshman students. The ninth graders from Tampa Catholic came



The shrine is considered by many to be one of the best in the whole state of Florida.



to Mary Help until their facilities were renovated and expanded enough to handle their whole student body.

In September 1974 a new director came to Mary Help, one who had been practically "raised" from his earliest years by the Salesians. Finally, we had an alumnus as director in the person of the Rev. James Jeffcoat, a native of Tampa. Rev. Jeffcoat was with us for two years, until his assignment as principal to one of the most prestigious Salesian schools, Don Bosco High School in New Jersey.

Father August Kita, who had spent time here at Mary Help as a young scholastic, returned to Mary Help as Director in September 1976. During his tenure, Mary Help celebrated its Golden Jubilee. Fr. Clementi still managed the band. Fr. Larry Urban had taken over the choir. Bishop Charles B. McLaughlin, D. D., Bishop of St. Petersburg, was the main celebrant for the Jubilee Mass which took place on May 21, 1978. Many guests, alumni, benefactors and longtime friends rejoiced in the blessings that had been bestowed on Mary Help of Christians School and its students in the past fifty years.

In 1981 Father Bernard Justen became Director of Mary Help of Christians. Father Justen is not only a native of Tampa and one of Mary Help's first students, but also Mrs. Neve's godson. Father Justen was appointed as Provincial of the Western Province in California in 1967. Father Justen is still active in ministry as a part of Mary Help's Salesian community in Tampa.

Father Steven Dumais became Director in 1983. During his tenure at Mary Help he built many important relationships with the community. He also helped our young athletes by coaching JV basketball.

In 1989 Father Dominic DeBlase became Director of Mary Help. He has previously served as the Provincial of the New Rochelle Province from 1979 through 1985. After his service as director of Mary Help, he took over as our financial administrator when Father James Mulloy was appointed Director in 1991. Currently Father DeBlase is serving as a Salesian Director in Sierra Leone. Father Frank Wolfram followed Fr. DeBlase as Director in 1994.

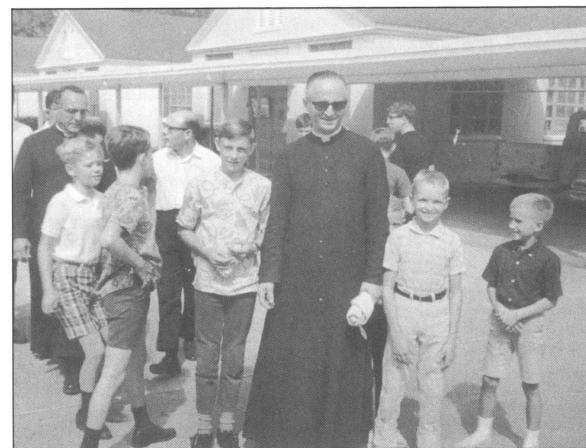
In 1997 Father Bill Keane became Director and saw Mary Help through some of the most significant changes. In 1998, the resident program at Mary Help ended, leaving only day students. Two years later, in August of 2000, Mary Help accepted girls for the first time, effectively transitioning into a co-ed middle school. Many of our graduates go on to local Catholic high schools to complete their secondary education. Father Keane was also the pastor of Good Shepherd parish, which holds services at the Mary Help of Christians Chapel.

Our current Director, Father Bill Ferruzzi, joined us in June of 2003. Father Ferruzzi most recently served as director of the Salesian Community of Columbus, Ohio. Father Ferruzzi has tremendous experience working with schools to increase enrollment and is eager to share his successful approaches with us.

In late 2003, the St. Philip the Apostle Residence will finally see completion. This project, begun under the direction of Father Keane, will provide a comfortable residence for Salesian priests and brothers. Many friends of Mary Help have taken part in the project by sponsoring rooms in the name of loved ones.

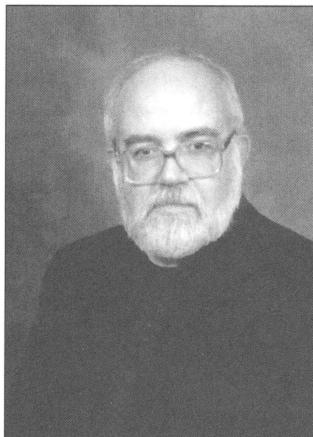


In 1974 Mary Help welcomed as director Rev. James Jeffcoat, a native of Tampa, Florida.

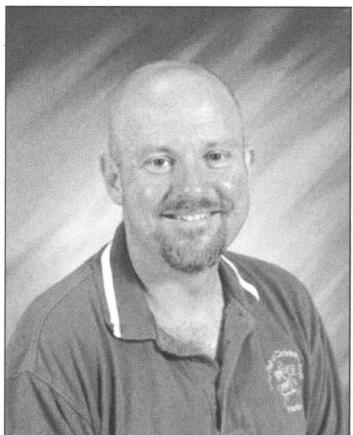


Fr. Alvin Manni, Fr. Santa Bibiana and Fr. "Mo" Malino

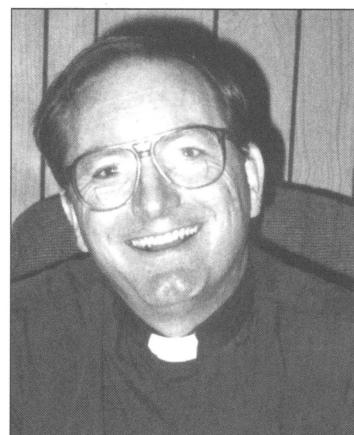
**Mary Help of Christians
Administration**



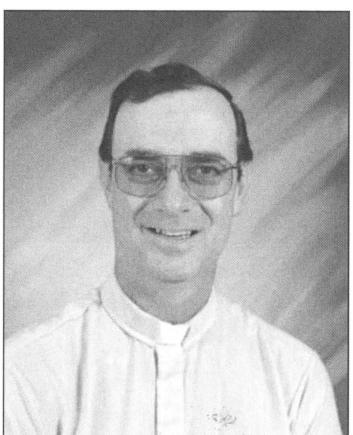
Father Bill Ferruzzi
Director



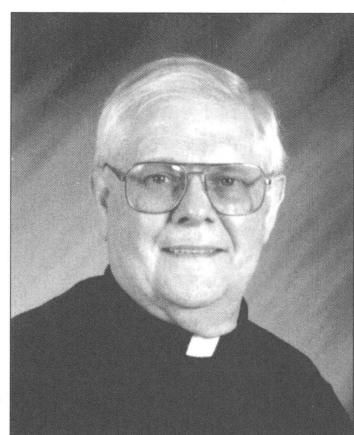
Dr. Stuart Miller
Principal



Father Michael Mendl
Financial Administrator



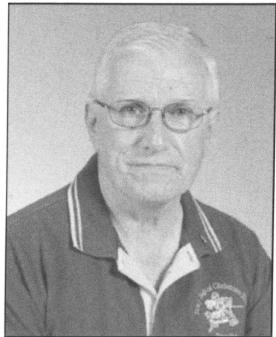
Father Larry Urban
Youth Minister



Father Jerry Pellegrino
Guidance

Mary Help of Christians

School Faculty



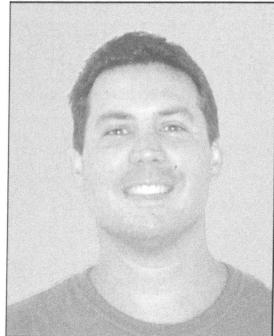
Brother Joseph Ackroyd



Ms. Jillian Bates



Ms. Mercedes Chiriboga



Mr. Mario Espinosa



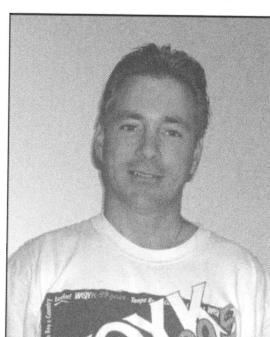
Mrs. Gina Fuller



Mrs. Kristina Herbst



Mrs. Jewell Knotts



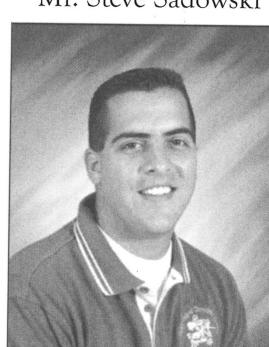
Mr. Steve Sadowski



Mrs. Dawn Sokalski



Ms. Carolyn Tipton



Mr. Kevin Vargas



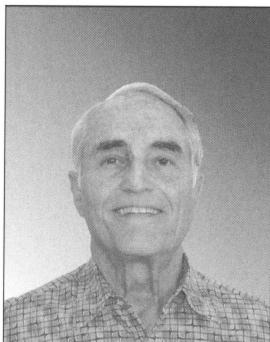
Mrs. Tina Walker

Mary Help of Christians

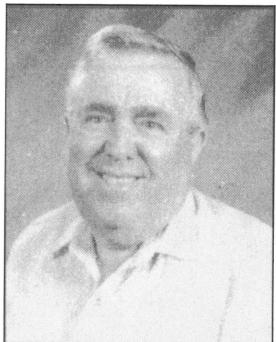
School Staff



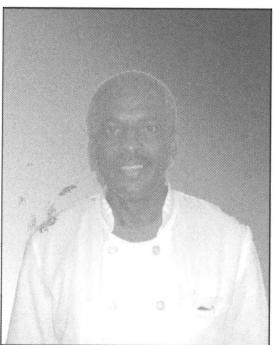
Mrs. Renee Campbell



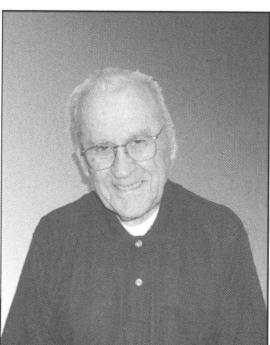
Mr. Tom Connor



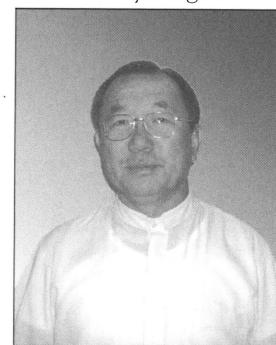
Mr. Ray Gagne



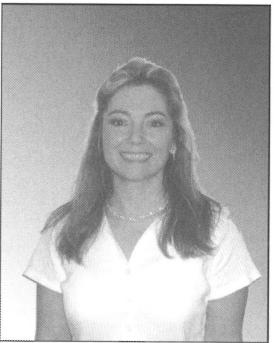
Mr. Nathaniel Jackson



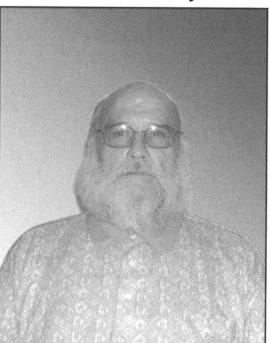
Father Bernard Justen



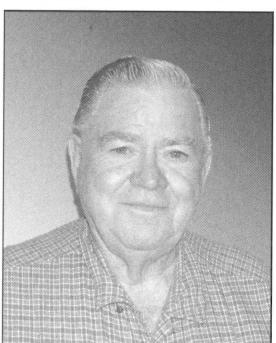
Father Bernard Lee



Mrs. Lucianne Leighton



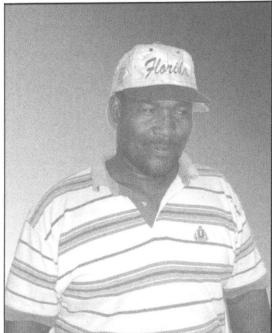
Brother George Marquis



Mr. Tom McDevitt

Not pictured: Ms. LaVonne Boyd

Mary Help of Christians School Staff



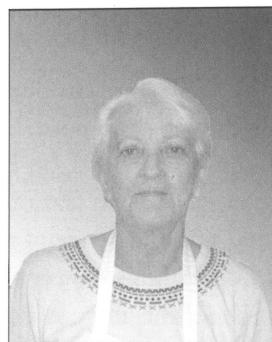
Mr. Michele Merzier



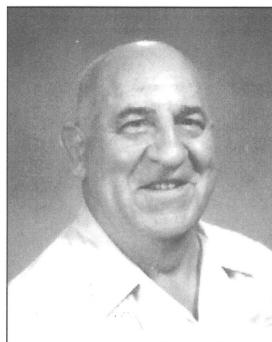
Mrs. Mary Ann Russo



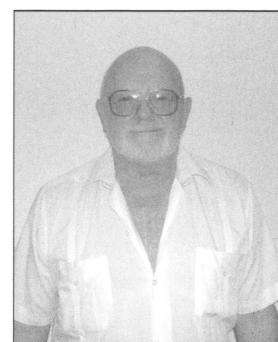
Mrs. Gloria Santosuosa



Mrs. Jackie Spivey



Brother John Versaggi



Father Don Zarkoski





Mary Help of Christians Changes to Meet the Needs of the Community

“Remember that education is a difficult art and that God alone is its true master. We will never succeed in it unless He teaches us the way.” — Don Bosco

The mission of the Salesian Order has remained the same since its founding by St. John Bosco in 1859: to be a friend — a friend to kids who were poor, kids abandoned, kids at risk — and in doing so, to be a friend to Christ. Don Bosco's Preventive System, which encourages students to behave not from fear or compulsion but from persuasion, preserves the dignity and independence of the child while helping the child to become a good Christian citizen. This concept had been at the foundation of Mary Help of Christians School for the past seventy-five years. While there have been many changes at Mary Help since 1928, the fundamental commitment to reason, religion and kindness in the education of children has remained the same.

St. John Bosco knew that in addition to the spiritual guidance and general education taught in his schools, his children needed to be taught useful skills so that they could become productive members of society. These boys would have the ability to do good work for the glory of God, and for their own survival.

In 1928 when the school was founded, the greatest need was to help disadvantaged boys. Without homes and parents to guide them, these boys were faced with a difficult life. Mary Help of Christians offered an environment where these boys could learn and grow in a safe, structured environment. Caring Fathers and Brothers provided guidance and taught the children religion and other worldly subjects. But Mary Help also prepared the boys for their adult life by teaching trades such as printing, cabinet making and auto repair.

From the 1950s through the 1970s, Mary Help of Christians became well-known for its music program, under the direction of Father Clementi, known affectionately as Father Clem. For 20 years, Father Clem directed Mary Help's band and choir, leading them in performances all over Florida. In 1964 he was awarded the St. Cecilia Music Award from Notre Dame University, which is presented to the person voted the most outstanding Catholic Music Educator. Father Clementi's leadership provided the boys from Mary Help with an appreciation of the musical arts, which they would be able to enjoy their entire lives.



Mary Help of Christians School in 1928

In the 1970s and 1980s, Mary Help of Christians began to take on a new look. There were more lay teachers on staff. The number of boarders started to go down and expenses started to go up. There were fewer and fewer orphans now. Those youngsters were usually put in foster homes to grow up in a family environment as much as possible. The students who did come started to have specific reasons for being enrolled in Mary Help of Christians' program. The reasons were not always the same. Some were struggling in their studies. Others were in a family that was going through a difficult divorce or separation. Some of the boys' parents had to work long hours and there would be no one there for them if they went home after school everyday. Mary Help became a school for children who needed a special environment for their education. Still, the basic beliefs of Don Bosco and the Salesians held strong.

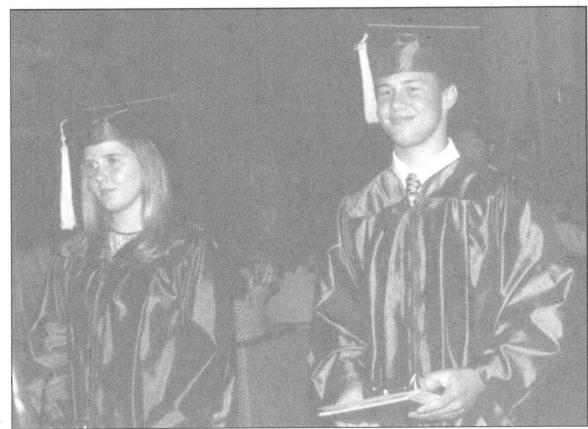
The most significant changes for Mary Help of Christians were still to come. August 1998 marked the beginning of a new era at Mary Help. For the first time since the school's inception, there was no resident program. Dr. Stuart Miller became the school's first lay principal. Then in 2000, Mary Help opened the doors to girls for the first time. Most recently Mary Help welcomed a fifth grade class with the 2003 school year and expanded the academic, elective and athletic offerings to provide enhanced educational opportunities.

So, where is Mary Help to go from here? Dr. Miller and his staff continue to build a strong academic program and to enhance the school facilities such as the media center and computer labs. An additional goal is to make technology a consistent component of each student's education. In this area Mary Help has added new computers, networked the school's computers and added both Internet access and the latest Microsoft applications.

As we give thanks for our past accomplishments and look forward to our future, we remain focused on our most important objective — to help young people become good Christian citizens, strong in character, faith and knowledge. We ask for God's blessing and support as we begin to write the next chapter in our history.



Fr. Clementi leads Mary Help's award-winning band.



Proud Mary Help Graduates

**Mary Help of Christians School
Foundation Board Members**

**Congratulate Mary Help of Christians School
on its 75th Anniversary**

Officers:

Scott Riley	Tom Connor
Chairman	Executive Director / Director of Development
Philip Alessi	Fr. Bill Ferruzzi
Vice Chairman	
J. Robert Lane	Executive Secretary / Director, Mary Help of
Treasurer	Christians School
	Lucianne Leighton
	Director, Public Relations

Board of Trustees:

Alicia Argiz-Lyons	Philip Morgaman
Antonio Argiz	Ben Ossi
Scott Bartholmey	Tom Pepin
Anthony Couch	Scott Riley
Larry Ellis	Jack Roberts
Frank Esposito, Jr.	Tom Rusche
W. Gregory Golson	Ron Russell, Sr.
Jim Hackman	John Ruzic
Lee Joeb	Robert Scanlan
Fred Joseph	John Sullivan
Alex Kelpsa	Lew Swick
Al Lopez, III	Alfred Villa
	Juanita Villa



Congratulations and Prayers from the Salesians at

The Church of Saint Kieran

STAFFED BY THE SALESIANS OF ST. JOHN BOSCO



Pastor

Rev. John Masiello, SDB

Chaplain La Salle H.S.

Rev. Bruce Craig, SDB

Associates

Rev. Albino Simonetti, SDB

Rev. Antonio Altarejos, SDB

Rev. Emil Fardellone, SDB

Brother Peter Bersezio, SDB

The Church of Saint Kieran
3605 South Miami Avenue
Coconut Grove, Florida 33133
Phone: (305) 854-1521



**Mary Help of
Christians
succeeds
through the
will of Our
Lord and the
gifts of our
friends.**

**“When many people do good they encourage
one another without even knowing it.” — Don Bosco**

The seventy five year history of Mary Help of Christians School is a living testament to this idea. Always it seems as though Mary Help has had friends and benefactors to pitch in whenever help was needed. So many different people have given time, talents and treasures to our beloved school, that to name them all would take a publication in itself. We can safely say that the individuals and families specifically honored here have gone above and beyond the call of duty in making Mary Help of Christians School the success it is today.

The first of these generous people is Mrs. Alicia M. Neve. Donating her land and property to found Mary Help of Christians School was just the beginning of her good works for “her boys.” One of her most influential gifts to the school was her founding of the Mama Margaret Guild. Mama Margaret was Don Bosco’s mother. The women of the guild rendered many services to the boys at Mary Help of Christians School, such as meeting at the school to mend the boys’ clothes and devoting two weeks a year to making marmalade from the oranges of the grove on the school property. The guild met periodically to plan ways and means of helping the boys. In 1930 they organized the first Easter egg hunt. By 1942 the Mama Margaret Guild had established chapters in Tampa, Miami, Winter Haven, Lake Wales, San Antonio and St. Leo. Many were the untold deeds and projects of the guild and other friends who kept Mary Help going in the first days of the school.

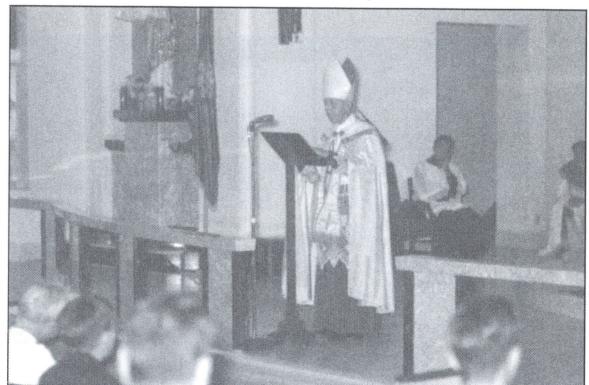
From its beginning Mary Help of Christians School had the full support of the Catholic Church in Florida, beginning with Most Reverend Patrick J. Barry, D.D., Bishop of St. Augustine, Florida. When he visited Tampa, he often stayed at the school. The room opposite Fr. Director’s room was reserved for him and came to be known as the bishop’s room. The bishop enjoyed the quiet of the country, loved to walk around the grounds and talk with the boys. At the beginning of the swimming season he blessed the lake and then took a ride in a rowboat. There were many occasions and episodes in which Bishop Barry showed his love and esteem for the Salesians and for Mary Help of Christians School, among them the yearly collection in the churches of the diocese for Mary Help.

The Tampa Council of the Knights of Columbus took a great interest in Mary Help from its beginning. On December 3, 1929, they sponsored the first charity ball for the benefit of the school. In 1930 they organized the first Columbus Day picnic, which became a yearly event. The picnic began with a Mass, at which the boys sang hymns, followed by lunch at noon, games and races in the afternoon, and a 4:00 P.M. program of music and singing under the shed. (For many years the shed was the only shelter from the rains during recreation time. It was located somewhere near the present day chapel). Collections for the school were taken up during the Mass and the program.

The Benedictine Fathers from St. Leo Abbey in St. Leo, Florida were close friends from the start. On February 26, 1928 when the cornerstone of the building was blessed, Abbott Charles Mohr, O.S.B. was among the many people present. In the 1930s there were two yearly outings, one to San Antonio and the other to St. Leo Abbey. The parish in San Antonio, St. Anthony's, was run by the Benedictines. At both places prayer, good food and entertainment were always on the agenda.

In the late 1930's during the times when Fr. Louis Rinaldi was Director, food supplies frequently failed to meet the needs and appetites of the boys. At around this time rationing came along. One of the scarce commodities to be placed on the table was meat. The boys certainly needed protein. It so happened that Abbot Francis of St. Leo Abbey, a great devotee of St. John Bosco, recently canonized, was faced with a serious problem in the running of the Abbey. This particular night he kept tossing and turning, praying for enlightenment in the solution of the tangled problem relating to the Abbey personnel. St. John Bosco appeared to him in some way and gave him the solution to the disturbing dilemma. However, at the end Don Bosco told him that he, Abbot Francis, should do him a favor. Abbot Francis was, of course, happy to oblige. What was the favor requested? St. John Bosco told him, "I have my sons in Tampa at Mary Help who at times are in need of food for the table. So, here at the Abbey when you slaughter one of your steers, or other farm animals, do remember my sons at Mary Help." And so it was that during the lean years after that, Abbot Francis would have his monks send meat over to Mary Help when an animal was slaughtered.

During Fr. Dominic Battistello's tenure, another benefactor was sent by Providence to help our work. One of the very first American newspaperwomen of note was Mrs. Mary Hayes Davis, of Chicago, Illinois. Besides other qualities, she had an indomitable pioneering spirit and a love for young people caught in the trap of unfortunate circumstances. A very capable businesswoman, she dreamed of founding an institution for needy girls. Through Divine Providence, she met and became acquainted with Mr. Harold Laird, an ardent admirer of our school. Mr. Laird told her of the existence of Mary Help, and suggested to her that God was prompting her to lend the material help the Fathers and Brothers needed to care for Florida's needy boys. She loved what she saw at Mary Help and immediately set to work, like her predecessor Mrs. Neve, to help out the school, fixing up a new



Mary Help has always had the support of the Catholic Church in Florida.



Mr. and Mrs. Harold Laird



Volunteers help to make our Spring Picnics and Fall Festivals a success

dormitory for the larger boys. The school got its first car from her generous giving. At her death in 1948, Mr. Laird found himself designated the chief executor of her will, which entirely benefited Mary Help. He remembered visiting her one day and being invited for lunch. He was served a helping of potatoes. When asked if he wanted more food, his affirmative reply was fulfilled with another helping of potatoes — that was all that was being served. She was saving up for her boys in Tampa.

During the 1940s Mr. Marcello Regis, who had started caring for our groves during Fr. Rinaldi's time, and who, by his very own hand, put in the first sidewalks around the school, continued and increased his help caring for our grove and farm land. He confided one day that he did all this to fulfill a vow he had made to St. John Bosco in thanksgiving for having been brought back to the practice of faith through the paternal care of Fr. Louis Rinaldi.

Another friend of the school who helped greatly during the period of expansion in the 1950s was Mrs. B. L. Herman. She lent of her services for many years without ever wishing nor accepting any recompense. Her help was especially valuable in lending her help and professional guidance regarding the school's bookkeeping. Her first gift to the school was a check covering the entire cost of new uniforms for our band, then numbering more than 70 members. Fr. Clementi could now take part in the local parades without fear that his young musicians would feel inferior to any of the other public school bands.

Mr. Francis J. Vocke was instrumental in the building of the new chapel. An immigrant from Germany, his thrift and hard work had helped him accumulate a small fortune. Through Father Emil he had come to know and love our school. When his wife, Odelia, passed away he decided that he would leave his savings to help build a shrine to our Lady for our boys in her memory. Thus it was that a sizeable sum of money came to the school during Fr. Manni's administration. That sum, plus the hundreds of small donations that came flooding in, did build a magnificent shrine to our Lady, to Mary Help of Christians.

A most outstanding family that has helped our school from the 1950s is the Raymond Azzarelli family. Mr. Raymond Azzarelli founded the Azzarelli Construction Company in Kankakee, Illinois. When he moved to Tampa he came to know about our work for boys. His generous heart was moved to help us. When he retired, one of his sons, Bart, took over where his father had left off and he greatly expanded his charitable work on behalf of our school. He built and paved roads. When the chapel was built he did all the clearing and the paving in front of it. When our pool was set up he took care of all the expensive drainage pipes; he installed the irrigation system in our grove. He cleared our land, drained the swamps and gave our cattle good pastureland to graze on. Our playing fields were put into shape and kept in good condition by him. Our blacktop recreation area was his gift. As a memorial to the family's mother, a beautiful marble statue to St. Joseph now stands facing the chapel at Mary Help.

Mention should also be made here of Mr. Charles Hansen of the Charles Hansen Music Publications, who became our friend during Fr. August Bosio's time. He supplied the band and choir with much-needed music, without ever

charging a penny. He was instrumental in getting published the music written by Father Clementi. He gave us our first stereo player, our first color television set and other items too numerous to mention.

Al and Juanita Vila burst upon the Mary Help Scene like goblins. With Juanita coaching tennis and establishing a cheerleading squad, Al was busy establishing contacts to bring our outdated electrical system up to present needed standards. As if this wasn't enough, they both sought to upgrade our tennis courts and baseball fields with the help of Bob Suarez of Suarez Construction. Once this project was finished, Suarez Construction came to our aid again in remodeling our locker/storage room and turning it into a relaxing, well-appointed teacher's lounge. This area gives our hard working teachers a place to unwind; a place away from all our little darlings for a short period of time.

In 2002, Juanita was chosen to become the Assistant Public Relations Director to help Tom Hornung in his massive marketing job to keep Mary Help of Christians in front for all to see. Both Al and Juanita have been instrumental in many facets of improvements around our campus and this all is done on a voluntary basis. God bless you both.

The support and assistance from Bob and Donna Suarez are greatly appreciated by all who are associated with Mary Help. Through their efforts Mary Help's students have benefited from new tennis courts, refurbished baseball fields, a new softball field and refinished blacktop basketball courts. In addition, Bob Suarez has donated money that allowed us to purchase a new LCD projector and arrange for Internet filtering for our student computer network.

Bob and Donna Suarez once said that if there was ever any child who needed something, anything, to please let them know. There was one opportunity that stands out in the long history of their generosity. A student had been put into a foster home while at Mary Help, and he had no clothes and was allowed no contact with his mother. As the school tried to arrange his continued enrollment, we needed some help. Rene Campbell, Principal's Administrative Assistant, called Donna Suarez and she came through with sweatshirts, underwear, socks and tee-shirts for the child. She outfitted him for the three months he was in foster care. As Rene recalls, "she was an angel to me because I was already picking him up and taking him home at the foster home every day to come to school, and could not provide much more than my sons' hand-me-downs to the boy. She really pulled through for us at that moment.

There definitely is a special place in heaven for Bob and Donna — only please don't rush to get there.

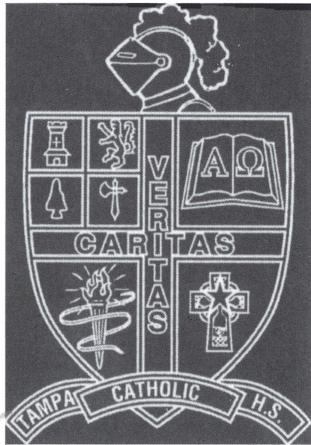
Mary Help still depends on the income from not only tuition, but also from donations, fund raising events and income from the Mary Help of Christians Foundation. The interest from the principal in the Foundation supports needy students with scholarships. Mr. Tom Connor, longtime friend of Mary Help, is the director of the Foundation and works to add more money to the principal each year. The chief fund raising events remain the Spring Picnic and Fall Festival. Donations through mailings and other activities have kept us in touch with many of our alumni and the kinds of people who have contributed to God's work here at Mary Help.



Fr. Bill Keane, Juanita Vila and Fr. Ken Germaine at the blessing of the new tennis courts.

Tampa Catholic High School

“Strength through Diversity”



- ❖ A co-educational diocesan high school in association with the Congregation of Christian Brothers
- ❖ Three integrated academic programs: Honors (includes Advanced Placement and Dual Enrollment offering college credit), College Prep and General
- ❖ Six Honor Societies
- ❖ New Chapel and state-of-the-art Science/Technology/Media Center

Experience a TC education through a personal tour or participate in our “Crusader for a Day” program.

Join us at Open House on November 20th from 7 P.M. to 9 P.M.

The top seven scorers on our Placement Test will receive partial academic scholarships.

Test Date: December 6th from 8:00 A.M. to 11:30 A.M.

Call Mrs. Peg Huey, Director of Admissions, at (813) 870-0860, #232 for reservations and more information.

Tampa Catholic High School

4630 North Rome Avenue

Tampa, Florida 33603

Phone: (813) 870-0860, #232 for admissions information
visit our Web site at www.tampacatholic.org

Rossiter Painting & Construction



Marlin's Top 10 Reasons to work with Grandpa...

10. Plaster is as fun to play with as mud.
9. Gets to climb scaffolding instead of monkey bars.
8. Gets to have a gun full of caulk.
7. Gets to paint over crayon drawings on wall.
6. Loves to play with putty.
5. Does not get in trouble for getting paint on his clothes.
4. Gets tasty treats for a job well done.
3. He gets paid more than the other painters.
2. Pressure washer... what a cool squirt gun.
1. Loves to see Grandpa's "Happy" face.

A family run business for 50 years.

Residential and commercial.

Rossiter Painting & Construction

4501 Clewis Ave.

Phone: (813) 299-4184

www.rossiterpainting.com



The Salesian Cooperators and Benefactors

“To the Salesian Cooperators is offered the same harvest as the Congregation of St. Francis of Sales.” — Don Bosco

In 1841 Don Bosco began enlisting the collaboration of many people to support his work to improve the welfare and education of the children of the working class people. As this group grew, he decided to unite them and form an association of Salesian Cooperators, co-responsible for the Salesian mission. The Salesian Cooperators are men and women who sense a call from God to dedicate their lives and activities to supporting Don Bosco's works.

After a period of brief instruction, the Salesian Cooperators make a promise to the Lord and to the local Salesian superior, a priest who represents the Rector Major of the Salesian Society of St. John Bosco. The vow to share the same mission in the church that St. John Bosco gave to the Consecrated priests, Coadjutor brothers and Consecrated women known as Salesian Sisters or Daughters of Mary Help of Christians. Each Salesian Cooperator is charged with carrying this mission into his or her own home, parish and activities. They follow the teachings of St. John Bosco, which provide guidance on how to join a high degree of personal holiness with a life of dedicated work for the education of the young. The ultimate goal is to educate the young, so that they may become good citizens and good Christians, capable of earning a living and contributing to society.

The Benefactors also are an essential part of fulfilling the Salesian mission to the young. The Benefactors are men and women who contribute to the support of the Salesian Works by donating money, services or by recruiting others to support the Salesian works for the needs of the young. Some can only pray which is very important.

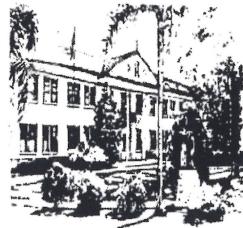
During Don Bosco's time, he would call for a general gathering of Benefactors and Cooperators at least once each year. During these meetings, Don Bosco often made it clear that the works of the priests, brothers and sisters would not exist without their help and concern. Today, as it was in Don Bosco's time, the works of the Cooperators and Benefactors are a key component of the success of the Salesian mission.



TAMPA'S
SALESIAN
COOPERATORS

applaud and rejoice in the
75th Anniversary of
Mary Help of Christians School

Congratulations



*Congratulations on your
75th
Anniversary*

*Our Best Wishes
for your continued success*

*Salesian Vocation
& Youth Ministry*

South Orange, New Jersey

HUDSON **CLEANERS** INC.

"Your environmentally safe cleaner."

ALL WORK DONE ON PREMISES

Brian Ferwerda
813-404-6242 (Cell)

11209-C North Dale Mabry
Tampa, Florida 33618
813-964-1253

18091 Highwood Preserve Causeway
New Tampa, Florida 33647
813-972-9900



BRANDON TV

"We Repair ALL Makes & Models"

Bethel, FL 33584

Bethel 888-8831

Valrico, FL 33584

Valrico 854-8553

Plant City, FL 33587

Plant City 754-8690

**Congratulations
to Mary Help of Christians
on 75 Years of helping
Tampa's Youth**

United Cab
1701 West Cass Street
Tampa, Florida 33606
Phone: (813) 253-2424



ALEXANDER & ASSOCIATES

Chartered Architects/Planners

Will A. Alexander, III, A.I.A.
President

309 Bellevue Boulevard
Belleair, Florida 33756

Telephone (727) 442-2323

Fax (727) 447-7137

Cell (727) 441-7111

admin@alexander-architects.com



“My Early Years at Mary Help of Christians”

**Reflections of Bro. John Versaggi, SDB, one of the first students
at Mary Help of Christians.**

The school opened in 1928 as an orphanage with about fifteen boys. All through the school year more children arrived. The two Versaggi brothers from St. Augustine brought the number to seventeen. By the end of the year we were twenty-eight.

Mrs. Neve, who founded the school, wanted to give Tampa children a home. Many of these children spoke more Spanish than English. The children from other parts of the state would have liked to learn Spanish, however it was forbidden because it would be mostly “cuss” words and vulgarity.

Mary Help was a new way of life for all of us. We soon felt at home with the new activities: running games like capture the flag to use our energy; studies to learn there was another world beside Ybor City and Tampa; church and Catechism to learn what it meant to be Catholic.

A clear sign that Mary Help had become home to us was that in talking to visitors, everything was described as “ours”: our lake, our orange groves, our choir, our band, etc.

Like a family, we had chores to help care for the school, such as making our own beds neatly and uniformly, sweeping floors, cleaning bathrooms, cutting wood for the kitchen stove, cleaning chalk boards, lining up the desks perfectly straight and praying for benefactors morning and evening.

The favorite place for recreation was the lake. When the wind blew, hyacinths, floating pads of flowers and grass, floated to the other side of the lake. Alligators always kept a respectful distance. If a snake came in sight, it was soon a dead snake, except for nonpoisonous snakes someone wanted to keep as a pet in their school locker (not exactly a safe place).

One day an elderly priest was hearing the confessions of the boys. One boy, on entering the confessional booth, saw something moving. The boy said, “Father, a snake.” The priest said, “Don’t worry my son, just tell your sins.” Again the boy said, “Father, a snake.” The priest again said not to worry. The boy saw the snake getting closer and repeated, “Father, a snake!” The priest looked up, saw the snake and practically jumped out of the confessional. He had never been seen to move so fast before.

What did two and a half years at Mary Help do for me?

It introduced me to the basics of my future life. The many little things I did at that time prepared me so I was not afraid of hard work. I actually developed a liking for this kind of work.

Mary Help also prepared me for my life as a Salesian Brother. I soon learned to love Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament. I learned devotion to the Immaculate Help of Christians, to live in the presence of God and to serve Her presence in all I did.

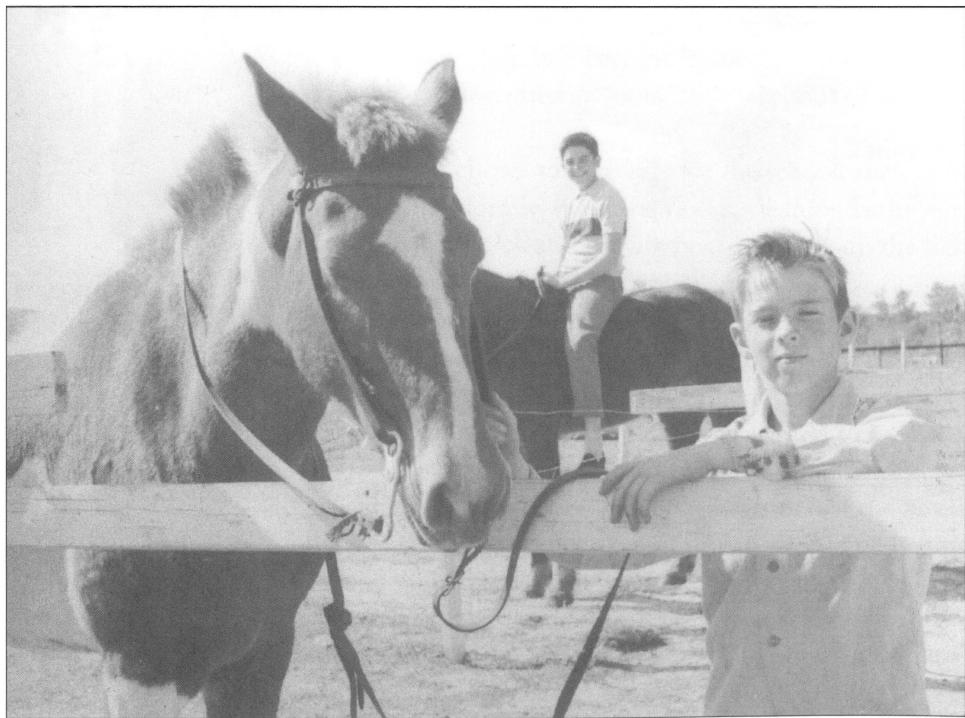


Recreation in front of Neve Hall

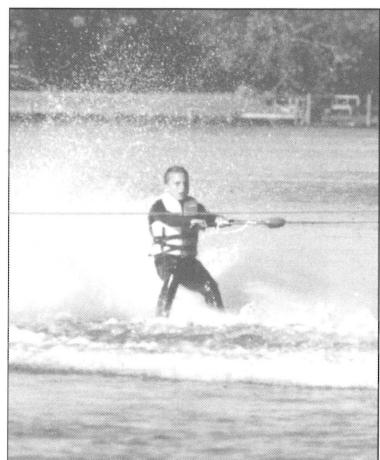


Brother John Versaggi, a 1932 graduate of Mary Help, tells students about Mrs. Neve

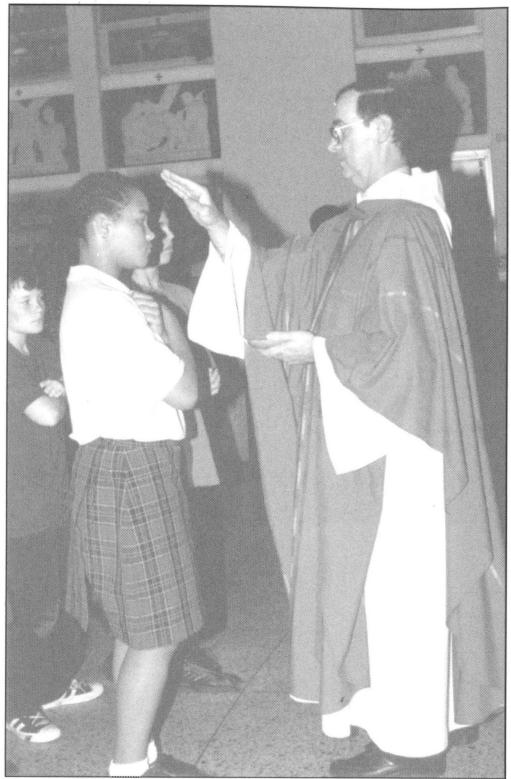
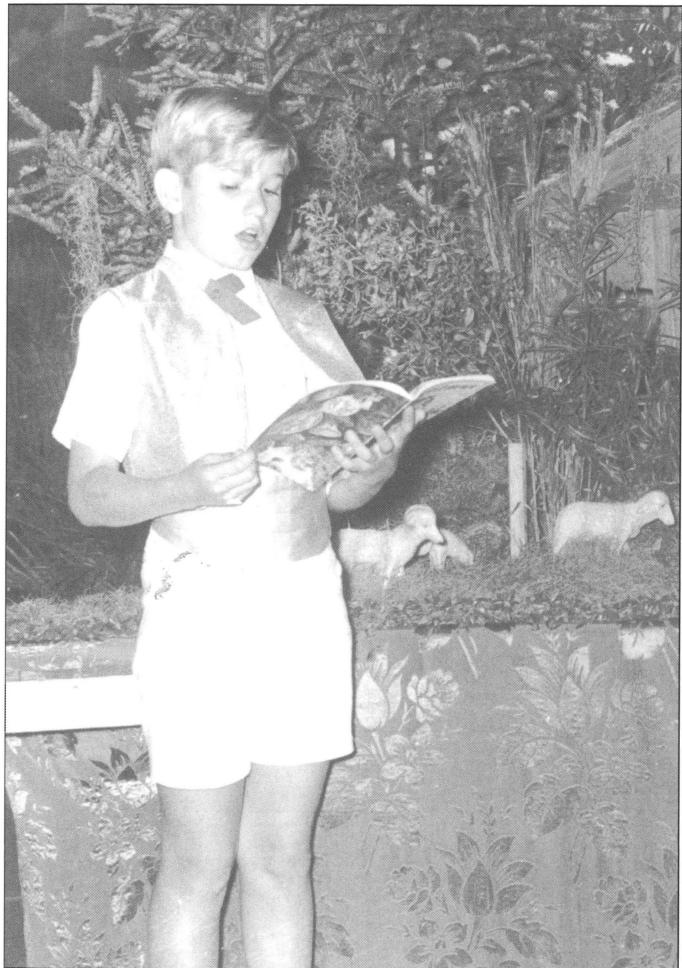
At Mary Help of Christians, we take pride
in our tradition of providing a home-like
environment for our students...



**Situated on
East Lake in
Tampa, Florida,
Mary Help of
Christians is
located on
over 100 acres
of land.**



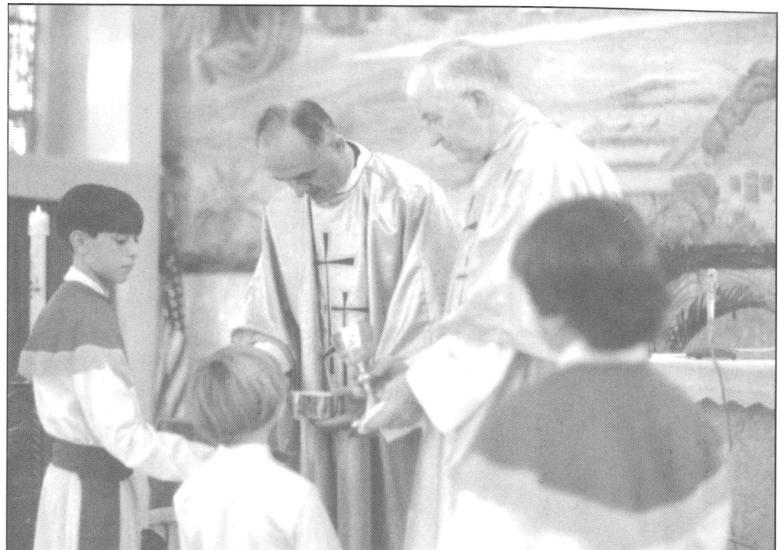
... enabling them to grow and develop



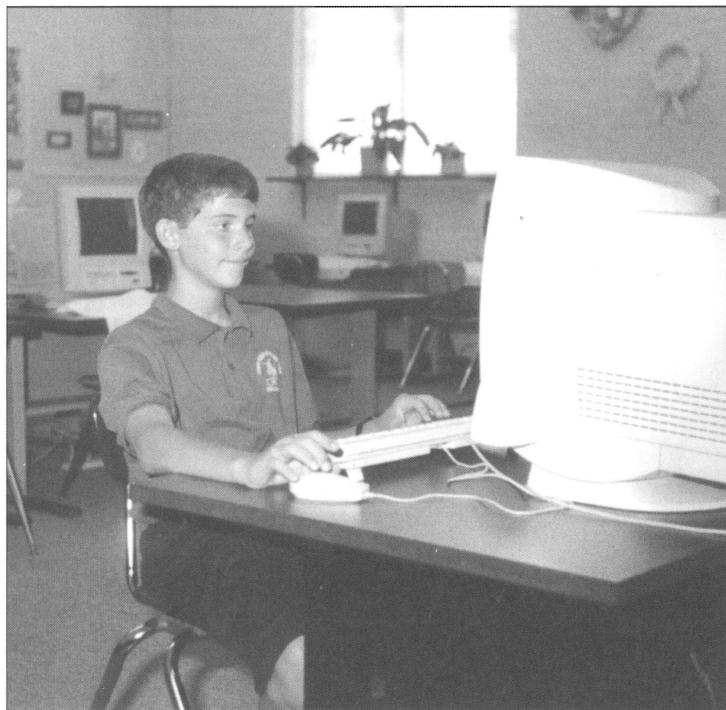
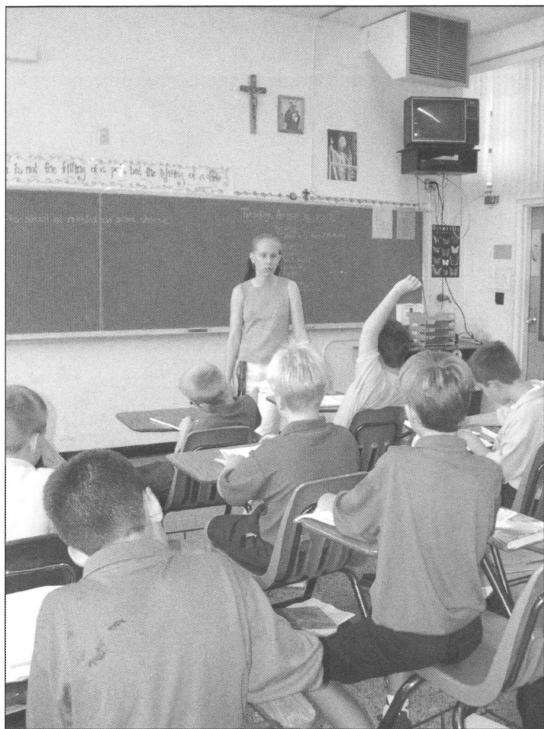


spiritually

Our objective is to form young Christian citizens who think, judge and act in accordance with the teachings of Jesus Christ.



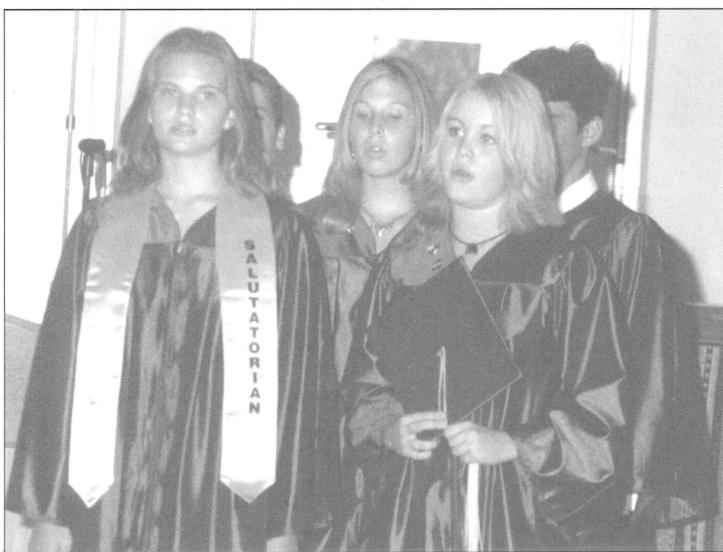
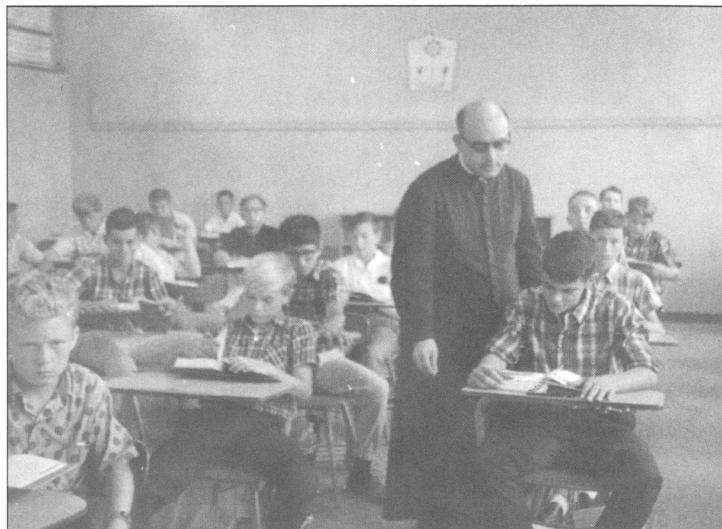
... enabling them to grow and develop



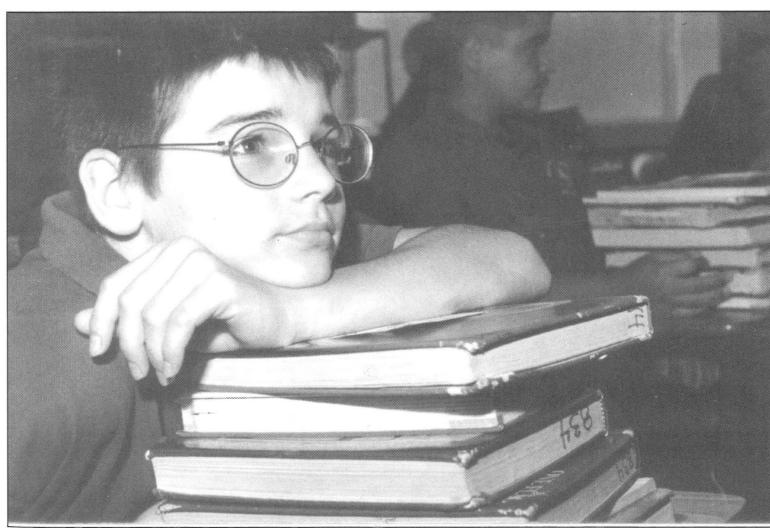
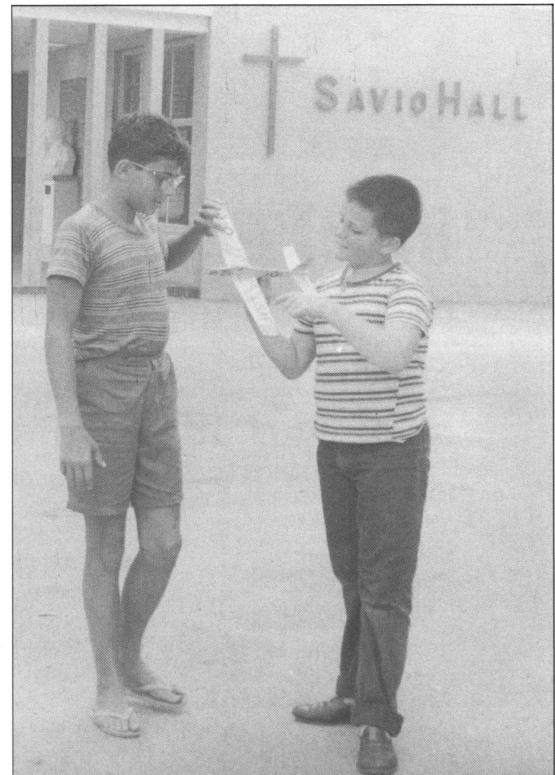


intellectually

Mary Help offers students a well-rounded academic and elective program.

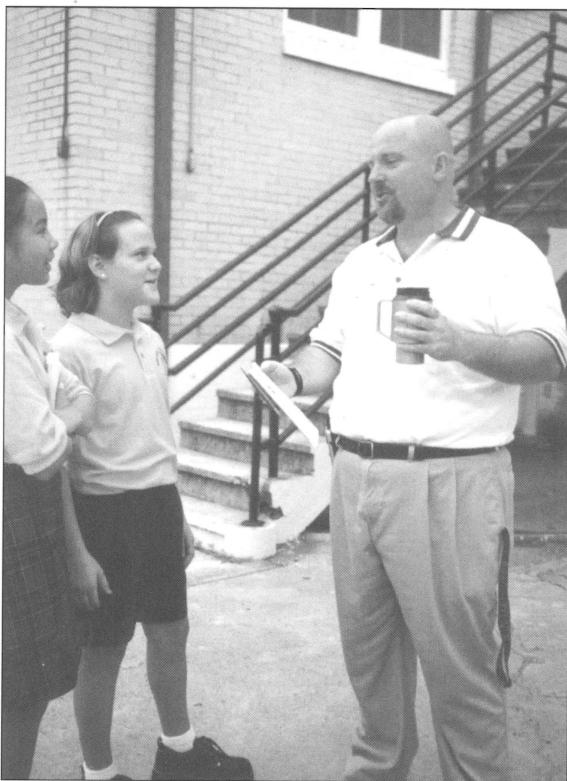


... enabling them to grow and develop

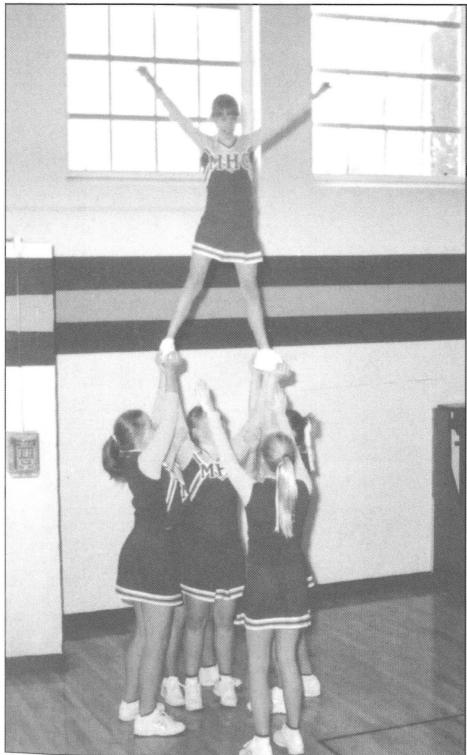


emotionally

Our students are well prepared to face life's challenges in their academic, professional and personal lives.



... enabling them to grow and develop





physically

Mary Help offers a variety of athletic programs to encourage physical fitness and teamwork.

