

Hi Dave,

Thank you very much for such a wonderful and touching ceremony last night, we have wonderful memories of our time at St. Thomas.

Words are not nearly enough to express my gratitude to you, the staff, and Fr. Jim – together you create a very special environment for our kids to grow in.

I remember our transition to St. Thomas, the decision to leave our current school – looking for something different, but what? Sometime in the 3rd grade – 2003, we realized that Forest Hills just wasn't enough...It was a year of anxiety and questions for me...What is the best fit for Brandon? The best fit for our family? We knew we wanted a Catholic school, so the search began...we looked at many – St Peter & Paul, IHM, St. Patrick's, St. Stephens, considered Holy Spirit...and then decided to look at St. Thomas, smaller, older, than IHM and St Peter & Paul...St. Thomas was our last visit, not sure why, and don't even remember how we heard of St. Thomas.

I remember meeting with you in the office, getting past the formalities of introductions...and then within the first few minutes of our visit, I knew. Do you ever have those moments when you truly, deeply feel the presence of the Holy Spirit? This was one of those moments for me, a calming sense of coming home settled upon me right there in your office! I knew this was the home for Brandon.

Your words spoke of faith, foundation, honor, respect, oh yes, and academics, too. But you spoke of so much more than just the grade, the score, the high marks. Finally, I understood what we were looking for. Academically, I knew Brandon would succeed to the best of his abilities no matter what school he was in. But it's the rest of it, the completeness of the spiritual environment that makes the difference. This has been a great blessing in all of our lives.

Many of our family could not, and still don't understand this choice. We live in a great school district, one of the best in the state, with so much to offer....why, why...would we choose to pay to send Brandon to a smaller school, so far away, with (in their mind) less to offer?!

Here's why:

My son is encouraged to pray each day, many times each day. He can pray before the math test, he can gather with his friends and pray in times of trouble, he has developed a relationship with Jesus.

Much is expected of my son each day, and you help me remind him of that.

My son is held accountable for his actions, not only by me and you, but also by the other families at St. Thomas that we've become close with. Yes, it does take a village! And I appreciate those other adults stepping in, stepping up when I cannot be there.

You care enough about my son to hold the bar high, and help him meet that challenge.

You know Brandon's character well enough to say "this is not typical Brandon behavior...something is not right".

This is so much more than academics. You cannot measure it, you cannot put a price on it... these values he will carry forward always.

So, thank you Dave, for the wonderful, spiritual, environment you, Fr. Jim, and the staff have created at St Thomas. I am thankful the Lord led us to you, I am glad we were able to be a part of it. Thank you for taking care of my son, teaching him, and helping him grow into the wonderful young man he is today!

Kim Cook, PMP