

Alumni Voices

At Bishop Baraga, we feel our students are one of the best measures of our success. It gives us great satisfaction to see our students grow and continue to develop their gifts. Many of our students have gone on to demonstrate academic excellence in high school or college (as is evident by our list of Valedictorians and Salutatorians below). Others showcase their talents through their community involvement or strong work ethic. Our "Alumni Voices" page provides an opportunity for some of these former students and their families to speak about the impact that Bishop Baraga had on their development. If you are a Bishop Baraga alumnus and would like to offer your thoughts, please feel free to contact the school office - we would love to hear from you!

Why Bishop Baraga? - "Testimonials"

Stephanie Shaw-Jones – Current Baraga Parent

My name is Stephanie Shaw-Jones. I have been involved with Bishop Baraga for 15 years. We have children ages 20, 18, 7, and 5. All of them have attended Bishop Baraga! I love our school; Bishop Baraga to me, is extended family. When my friends ask why I choose Bishop Baraga my immediate answer is, "I feel as if I leave my children with my family when I drop them off at school."

Knowing that my children are going to be mentored and taught with a Christian philosophy every day and that they are expected to perform at a higher level is everything I want for them. Our 2 older children have had to make the merge to the Public School System and it was very interesting. I found that my older two children, Lauren and Rory, were both at the top of their classes and both had very high academic standards set for themselves.

As a parent we all want the best for our children. I feel that the environment, the staff and the school fundamentals are the best for my children! I firmly believe that upon enrolling your child/children in Bishop Baraga, you too will feel the family environment and love that we all share for each other and our school.

Our community is truly blessed to be able to offer a Christian Education such as Bishop Baraga offers.

Melissa Goodrich – Current Baraga Parent

Moving from a top-ranking school district to Cheboygan, I was looking for a similar strong academic education for my children. Our family is not Catholic, but the reputation of Bishop Baraga's academic excellence and family-like atmosphere convinced me to enroll my three children. Even given the school's excellent reputation, I was concerned my children would be too far ahead and become bored. Instead, they had some catching up to do to reach Bishop Baraga's curriculum standards.

In addition to being challenged academically, the children are given a solid moral foundation, which will be vital in assisting them in their decision-making as they get older.

Regardless of each family's religious preference, the parents and students are very welcoming to newcomers and it was easy for the kids and I to quickly become part of the Baraga family.

Elizabeth Teklinski – Current Baraga Parent

Today, I am writing to share with you how invaluable my child's experience has been in Mrs. Kayte Schryer's three and four-year-old preschool program at Bishop Baraga Catholic School.

My husband and I decided to move back to my hometown of Topinabee in 2013—in part, inspired by our very impressive visit to Bishop Baraga the previous Spring. My husband, Andrew Teklinski, MD, is a cardiologist for McLaren Northern Michigan in Petoskey and I have been raising our five children while pursuing my advanced degrees in human development and psychology. I also have a secondary teaching degree from the University of Michigan and a Master's degree in educational counseling.

Our youngest child, Theodore Xavier (or just “Teddy”) was three years old when we moved here. He had been on the waiting list and we received a call from Kayte regarding an opening right before classes were set to begin. First of all, he cried and cried telling us that he “was not ready.” I even made the call to my husband on my way to the first day of school, as I was ready to keep him home for another year. Thank goodness I decided to make him go that fateful first day. From then on, Teddy would take off in a blur to get to his classroom each morning. He loved Ms. Kayte (along with the classroom rabbit named “Clover”) with all of his heart. As a kindergartener, Teddy is presently the most advanced for his age of all of our children in regards to reading and writing so young. He is also a talented artist. Our daughter (two years older) has expressed to us her wish that we had moved here earlier so that she could have had “Ms. Kayte” as her own pre-school teacher.

Kayte is a most loving and thoughtful teacher and, moreover, a true exemplar of integrity, Catholic values, academic excellence, and creativity. Her aid Mrs. Brenda Dunham is an ideal fit in her thriving preschool classroom. I wholeheartedly recommend Bishop Baraga's preschool program to anyone looking to give their young children the very best first start and foundation for a life lived up to their God-given potential.

In conclusion, I hope that the main take away from all of this is that my child's experience has been truly wonderful. I definitely believe that our son would not be where he is today had he not had Ms. Kayte for two critical years during his early childhood development. I will gladly furnish enthusiastic recommendation and compelling testimony to any person who might want to contact me personally to discuss Bishop Baraga Catholic School's Three and Four-Year-Old Preschool Program.

Will Hinkley – Bishop Baraga Alumnus

I will proudly stand up and tell anyone that the best teachers around can be found at Bishop Baraga. They were what made going to class fun as well as something to look forward to. There were no favorite students, as we were all equally important to all the teachers. They took the time to make sure that we understood and learned our lessons; and they took the time to make sure we were happy and having fun too. The teachers didn't forget their students as they moved on to the next year either. Once you had a teacher, you became part of them and they became part of you. We were truly a family at Bishop Baraga.

At Bishop Baraga School I learned a lot of important things. I learned my lessons in class, the importance of working hard and studying hard, and the importance of treating others with respect and kindness; a valuable lesson which I will never forget. I learned about our faith and that letting God into our lives is much more important than some people may think. And most of all, I learned that Bishop Baraga School is not just a school; it's a home.