



BECAUSE *we are* CATHOLIC

Inner city educator has connected, influenced students for nearly 40 years

Kathleen Filippelli wanted to be a teacher ever since she was in the third grade. But the Baltimore County native figured it would be at a school like her alma mater, Maryvale Prep. Little did she know that a student-teaching experience at a prestigious prep school would alter her path.

“Within the first few days, I was horrified with the fact that the children in first grade did not need me,” said Filippelli, now the principal of Holy Angels Catholic School in southwest Baltimore. “When I interviewed at Our Lady of the Holy Souls (north Philadelphia) after graduation, almost immediately I knew that is what God wanted me to do.”

After six years at Our Lady of the Holy Souls, Filippelli returned home and is now in her 33rd year educating Baltimore City Catholic school students.

“Other people think Catholic schools take the top scholars,” she added. “We actually don’t. We take children who have been in situations that didn’t work but with families who are committed. When we opened Holy Angels, we wanted to take kids with learning differences so we have a special educator on staff who helps preview the children’s needs and teach the teachers the modifications that the child will need. Will that child help in the standard test scores? No, but I care more about the child and the life he or she will have than I do about the numbers. Our story, in all the inner city Catholic schools, is told by the high schools that our kids attend.”

Filippelli spent 12 years as a teacher and principal at All Saints Middle School and 15 as the principal at Father Charles Hall Elementary School in the Sandtown-Winchester neighborhood before moving to Holy Angels in 2010. Programs like the Lawrence Cardinal Shehan Scholarship Fund and Partners In Excellence, which were designed to help families who needed



From left to right, former student Quintin Moody (1988), teacher Kathleen Filippelli, and former student Marcus Russell (1988), reunited.

tuition assistance to be able to afford and have their children attend Catholic school, created many success stories.

“I think that Catholic education is the number one reason why families are able to elevate out of poverty,” Filippelli said. “Education is the root and Catholic education seems to be doing it better. I think our track record proves that.”

Quintin Moody grew up near Pimlico Race Course and took advantage of the Cardinal Shehan Scholarship Fund. He graduated from All Saints in 1988 then attended Cardinal Gibbons and earned a basketball scholarship to Towson State University. Now the owner of World Class Auto Detail, he considers his former teacher “one of the most influential people in my life.”

“For some reason she has this great connection with all of her students,” Moody said. “Both my parents were there for me but with major decisions Miss Kathleen was there, always asking the right questions in order for us to make the right choice.”

Moody now organizes an annual All Saints reunion each summer.

“People come back to see her,” Moody added. “We are not the only class that holds reunions, so she impacted many and was instrumental in getting us to where we are today. There was something about that school and something about Miss Kathleen as a person that kept us together. I have friends who cannot believe I still see my middle school teacher and have reunions with classmates. It is amazing.”

THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IN MARYLAND SERVES AND ADVOCATES FOR THE POOR, VULNERABLE AND THOSE IN NEED NOT BECAUSE THEY ARE CATHOLIC, BUT **BECAUSE WE ARE CATHOLIC.**