

# BAYLEY

BULLETIN

**WINTER  
CONTEST:**

SHORT STORIES  
ENDS JANUARY, 31ST!

**FROM SETON  
TO COLLEGE:**

MAKING THE MOST OF YOUR  
COLLEGE EXPERIENCE

**WHAT IS THE SETON  
COLLEGE PARTNER  
PROGRAM?**

**ALUMNI PROFILE:**

**SARAH  
FREDDINO**

THE MORAL MIRACLE  
OF THE **CHRISTMAS  
TRUCE**

**CHRISTMAS  
CONTEST WINNER**

**MARIE VALDOVINOS  
SIMPLICITY**

THE BEST GIFT GOD EVER GAVE ME





CHRISTINE SMITHA

# EDITORIAL

“Christmastime is here. . .” Well, at least the Christmas issue is. Welcome to the Winter Quarter of Seton Home Study School’s Bayley Bulletin, which features insights from recent Seton graduates about navigating college, tips

for staying on track by a current student, a meditation on one of modern history’s great miracles, and of course, the winning essays from the annual Christmas writing contest.

The student authors who won this year’s contest did an excellent job of crafting essays about Christmas gifts. However, all of the entries impressed me by clearly recognizing the fact that “gift” encompasses so much more than just what money can buy. From the simple to the profound, the comedic to the poignant, every essay demonstrated awareness and gratitude for the true meaning of Christmas.

As I think about gifts and gifting myself this year, I keep returning to the blessings of friendship, of God’s friendship with mankind (“No longer do I call you servants. . .but I have called you friends.” Jn. 15:15), and of the friendships He makes possible between and amongst ourselves.

So much does God cherish us that He gave us His only Son, and that we might perpetuate that gift of love, He commanded us to love one another as ourselves for His sake. Thus, “no greater gift has man than to lay down his life for love.” There is nothing greater we can give to one another than ourselves.

This year, I am grateful to God in a particular way for the good friends He has provided me in this life—friends who walk with me on this journey to Heaven, and give themselves with their time, attention, prayer, joy, and encouragement toward holiness.

As we gather around the crèche this Christmas, let’s all take time to thank the ones who love us, and in particular, to thank the One Who is Love for giving Himself to us.

Merry Christmas and a very blessed and peaceful New Year!

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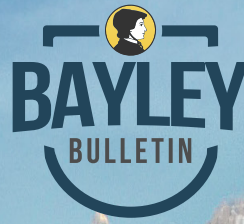
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# THE WINTER CONTEST: SHORT STORIES

The fictional short stories should feature Catholic values, beliefs, or sacraments. Additionally, they should have character development, and be based in real life scenarios. Entrants must be enrolled in Seton high school.

One winner will be named for each high-school grade level.

If no story of distinction is found in a particular grade level, that level may be without a winner.

More details and how to enter online!

## SUBMISSION DEADLINE

January 31st, 2015

## PRIZES

1st Place: \$100  
1 winner per grade level.



## ALERTING ALL CONTEST ENTRANTS!

**Sign up today for our bonus Short Story Writing Course with 15 sample stories!**

Starting December 18th, we will email you tips and guides to help you with the craft of writing your contest entry.

Get some inside information on the kind of stories we're looking for, and **give yourself the best chance of being a finalist.**

All submissions are welcome!

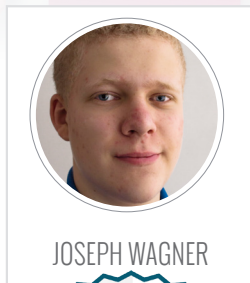
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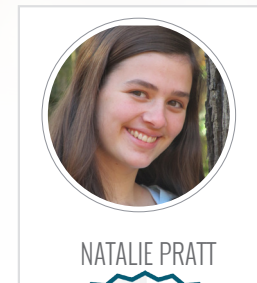
[bayleybulletin.com/shortstory](http://bayleybulletin.com/shortstory)



# THE WINNERS OF THE 2015 SETON **CHRISTMAS** **ESSAY CONTEST**



JOSEPH WAGNER



NATALIE PRATT



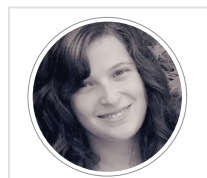
## MARIE VALDOVINOS

**Congratulations** for winning the Seton 2015 High School Christmas Essay Contest!

All Entries were judged by quality and adherence to the contest topic: the theme of 'Gift'.

Marie was awarded the first prize of \$100 for her essay.

The judges whittled the entries down to the top 8. To reward their efforts in entering the contest, they voted to see these three extra entries published with an honorable mention:



ISABELLA ROLLINS



JOSEFA LINNELL



TERESA REGNIER

Any Further entries of note will be published online  
at [BayleyBulletin.com](http://BayleyBulletin.com).







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MARIE VALDOVINOS

# SIMPLICITY

## THE BEST GIFT GOD EVER GAVE ME



“It’s a gift to be simple.” As a youngster I’d often heard this proverb emphasized during Christmastime.

I must add that there was also a time I just didn’t get the “gift” part of the phrase. I often wondered, *What can one get out of being simple? Doesn’t “simple” mean to be stripped bare of belongings?* I was significantly disturbed when I used to hear this quote, and ended up misinterpreting it as a consequence.

As far as I was concerned, simple living was for the homeless and destitute; I much preferred comfort and entertainment during the holidays and every time of year.

What I didn’t realize is that these things can lead to myopic insights and spiritual blindness; these, of course, are exactly what I adopted because of my secular viewpoint which, I might add, could easily have shaped the rest of my childhood and youth.

It was lucky for me that God decided to do something about that in December 2008, the year He sent both a Herculean snowstorm and a valuable message my way.

Both came unexpectedly. Ten days before Christmas, a fierce blizzard swept by our Northern Oregon neighborhood and dumped about six inches of snow on our doorstep. According to the news, this amount was a record-breaker!

Over the course of that week, the front lawn became a playground for us kids, who had no idea of the shortcomings which were to follow. Wait until we told all our grandparents what they were missing out on!

And then... the problems began. The weekend before Christmas,



our van's power steering failed on the road, leaving us stranded and in shock. We ended up having to push the car into a parking lot. Since their phone batteries had died, my parents couldn't call a towing service, either. To heap insult upon injury, we had no way to get home except to walk (and how many of us wanted to walk almost ten miles?).

Fortunately, though, a kind stranger miraculously stepped in by hiring a snow vehicle to return us home safely. The family van, alas, was left behind in that parking lot. Now I realized my family would have to live through Christmas without the car (gasp!)—until it could be retrieved and repaired. Enter simplicity.

Frustrated and determined to fix matters, we started wishing and, yes, even praying for the snow to melt. I prayed especially hard, *Please, God, make the snow go away so my parents can buy us presents this year.* The realization of not having a “normal holiday” nearly drove me to panic.

December 24th arrived at last, yet the stubborn snow still refused to release its claim on our town. Between this fact and three sporadic power failures that occurred throughout that week, I was virtually fit to be tied due to these inconveniences. Because we couldn't go grocery shopping, my mom decided to scrape together a substitute Christmas feast using leftover ground turkey, bell peppers, and sweet potatoes.

Given that I was already famished and frustrated, I had little energy left to voice my protest against the entrée. Despite my distaste, however, I had to admit that such a simple meal spared me and my sisters the tedious duty of cleaning a mountain of cookware. *Maybe there is a little advantage in a basic lifestyle,* I reconsidered begrudgingly.

Though I would have preferred to spend the evening writing Santa an extensive wish list, I chose to read my siblings Christmas stories by the fireplace instead; I knew they were suffering as much of a culture shock as I was. I ended up enjoying my time with them so much that I almost forgot there were

six inches of snow outside, no car in the driveway, and no treats or excess gifts in the house. Because the snowstorm forced us to rely on our present supplies, I was slowly learning to sacrifice a typical Americanized holiday laden with commercialism and accumulation.

In striking contrast to millions of American households, our own home boasted very few decorations and a scant stock of presents underneath the Christmas tree that year. As time progressed, I began regarding our situation as more of a blessing than a curse because, after all, wasn't Jesus born in a small cave and wrapped in a manger? If He could accept meager provisions, so could I. My prayers began shifting from self-centered begging to more peaceful gratitude for what we did have to share with each other.

In retrospect, I can now confidently say that I have heartily embraced the Christian view of simple living during the holidays. As I matured, my attention shifted from how many presents there were under the tree to how many blessings there were to be thankful for. This just goes to show that the best gifts in life are those that cannot be seen, and it takes a special heart to understand that simplicity is the greatest of them all.

Moreover, for those of you who may still be left wondering, the word “simple” does not necessarily equal “stark poverty” or “rigorous asceticism”. There can be and there are benefits from being simple which I've gained over the years: less temptation to material attachment, appreciation for the bare necessities, and time for contemplating the selfless birth of Christ.

Talk about a three-in-one bargain!

---

**Marie Valdovinos** is a Seton senior with 5 younger siblings. She has practiced creative writing for almost 12 years. Her other great hobbies include sketching, singing, and reading anything written by Tolkien and Dickens, her literary role models. She owes all her writing skills and current success in school to Seton's rigorous yet rewarding English curriculum. One of her biggest goals is to be a published author.



READ ON LINE ▶



JOSEPH WAGNER

## TOO WRAPPED UP IN CHRISTMAS HOW I FOUND MY 'ULTIMATE GIFT'



Have a holly, jolly Christmas; it's the best time of the year..." Hearing Burl Ives' voice on the mall radio for the sixth time that morning was more than enough for me. I vented a sigh of frustration and confusion. Christmas was hastily approaching, and I was knee-deep in the laborious process of perusing the stores for the "perfect something" for my parents and siblings.

Everything was wild during my hunt. The stores were packed tighter than sardine cans; bold, tacky decorations besieged my eyes; and an ecstatic "Hallelujah!" was let out if I could find a space in a parking lot. After glancing about, I thought to myself, "Why are all these people here? What am I doing here?" So many people had strayed from the true meaning of Christmas and what "giving a gift" really means...had I done the same?

I thought I was fully aware of the true meaning of Christmas—it was the celebration of Christ's birth, and a time for family and friends to rejoice. Hitherto, I was falling into a trap—a secular, stereotypical trap of "I gotta buy," or, "I gotta find the perfect gift!" I believed that since my family was devout and traditionally oriented, I would definitely not become secularized and go on shopping sprees. With this thought in my mind, it was easy for me to return my items and leave. "There," I said, "I got myself



out of the snare that the rest of these people are falling into!” I marched triumphantly to my car, but in my mind, I was still troubled. As I was driving home on the bustling city streets, I drowned out the sounds bombarding me, and I began to seriously contemplate about “the trap.”

Maybe there was no perfect gift. Did I *really* have to go to the mall that day, only to buy something that provides temporary pleasure? Sure, it shows that I was considerate of others, but they still would gain only momentary happiness. The thought was perplexing. As I inched my car forward in the traffic, I looked around with an empty stare.

Every person I saw was either miserably lugging extra-large shopping bags out of a store, or was rushing into a store after cramming their SUV with items they had just purchased. All the people I saw, including myself, were being tricked; everything I laid eyes on was the exact opposite of what most Christmas songs and television ads said they were. It was no longer looking a “holly-jolly,” but rather a blue, blue Christmas.

The many thoughts I had on my mind became too much for me. As soon as I skidded into our icy driveway, I went inside my family’s house to look for answers. The process was harder than I had expected. I honestly did not know where to begin my search. After personal deliberation, I thought I would begin with finding the definition of “Gift.” I pulled an old dictionary off the bookshelf, and after pawing through several dusty pages, I found it: a gift is a thing given willingly to someone without payment. After reading this, I paused for a moment, and then turned my chair to look at

a small crucifix on the wall, and then at a small nativity setup in the living room. The puzzle pieces began to fit together.

Practically everything I had questioned made sense now!

All of my confusion had suddenly dissipated. The people in the malls, the stores, and on the streets were searching. The world had become so modernized and non-traditionally oriented that virtually no one had answers to this question of why one gives a gift on Christmas! It had become habitual.

Parents, grandparents, and great-grandparents have always remembered the iconic “joy of Christmas morning” and “the delight of seeing someone unwrap a present.” Those times had existed, and there really was true happiness and meaning at Christmastime. That is why the exchange of gifts began; it reminded the giver and receiver of the best gift ever bestowed on mankind thousands of years ago on Christmas Day—Jesus Christ. As with most religiously-oriented events and practices, however, the world twisted the holy day to become a holiday. Instead of saying “Merry Christmas,” most now exclusively say, “Happy Holidays” because they have lost the significance of the Incarnation and birth of Christ. The shoppers were too wrapped up in Christmas. The clock was counting down, and I still had not found anything that my parents and siblings would enjoy...then an idea flew in.

I wasted no time in getting back outside to my car. I hopped in, turned the key, and drove to resume my search in the mall; this time I knew exactly where I was going. God must have liked my idea; I found a

---

*It was no longer looking a “holly-jolly,”  
but rather a blue, blue Christmas.*



parking spot in the front of the lot, and “blowout” sales were happening on the other side of the mall. When I got inside, I saw a small wooden shop sign in the distance. I walked briskly to it, and as I entered, I read the large words carved on the sign: “The Franciscan Place.”

Three days later on Christmas morning, I staggered tiredly down the stairs to meet my mom and dad sipping coffee and my bright-eyed, giddy younger siblings around our Christmas tree. We all exchanged personal gifts first. My siblings gave me play-dough monsters impaled with pipe cleaners, which I gratefully accepted. Then my parents handed each of us a gift card to our favorite stores. I was next. I handed each of my family members a tiny, neatly-wrapped box. They all opened them simultaneously; gasps of awe were let out. Inside

each box was an olive wood carving of the Holy Family, with a stone from Calvary in the base.

I then explained to them my thoughts and how lost people were about the true meaning of Christmas and what “giving a gift” really means. I believed the carvings could not have summed-up my story and the meaning of Christmas any better.

I do not think this was the best Christmas ever because I had found a good gift, but because I had found the ultimate Gift.

---

**Joseph Wagner** is 7th in line of a family of 8. He has been homeschooled his entire life. He is an avid photographer, and has been a cadet chief master sergeant in Civil Air Patrol - the United States Air Force Auxiliary - for over 2 years.



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NATALIE PRATT



## WUPPIES & GIFTS: OUR STRANGE CHRISTMAS TRADITION

As my family celebrates each passing Christmas, my memory never fails to recall that Christmas when I learned the true beauty of the age-old tradition of Christmas giving. It was our first Christmas at our new home, and the move had made money rather tight that year. Mom and Dad had told us kids not to expect many presents that year. The warning, however, did not dampen the excitement that inevitably came over me at the approach of the most wonderful time in the whole year.

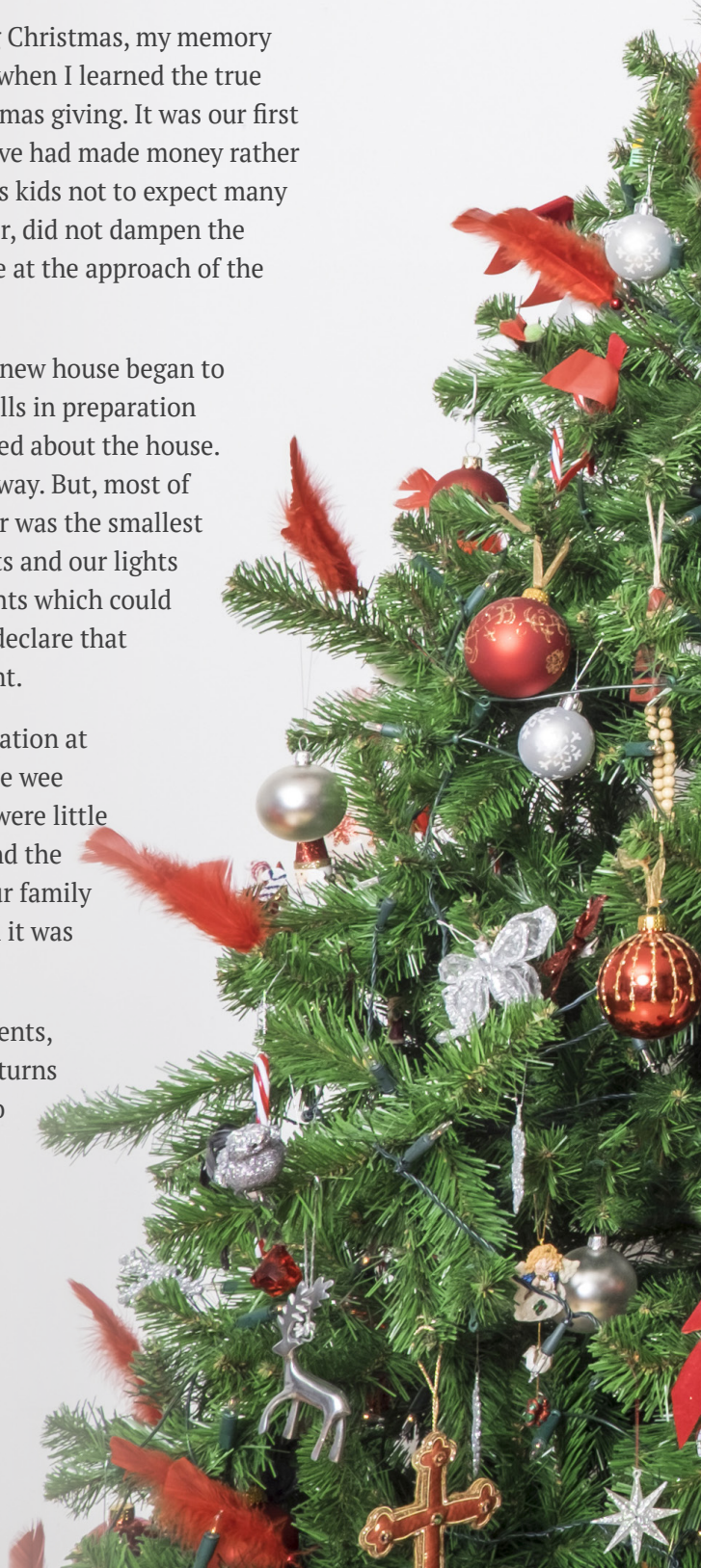
As the great solemnity drew nearer, our new house began to feel more like home as we decked the halls in preparation for Christmas. Nativity scenes were placed about the house.

Verdant green garland and bright red bows bedecked every doorway. But, most of all, I will always remember our Christmas tree. Our tree that year was the smallest little fir I had ever helped to decorate. We piled all our ornaments and our lights on that little tree, and it glowed and sparkled with the adornments which could have decorated three trees its size. The whole house seemed to declare that Christmas would be as joyous as ever, even if it would be different.

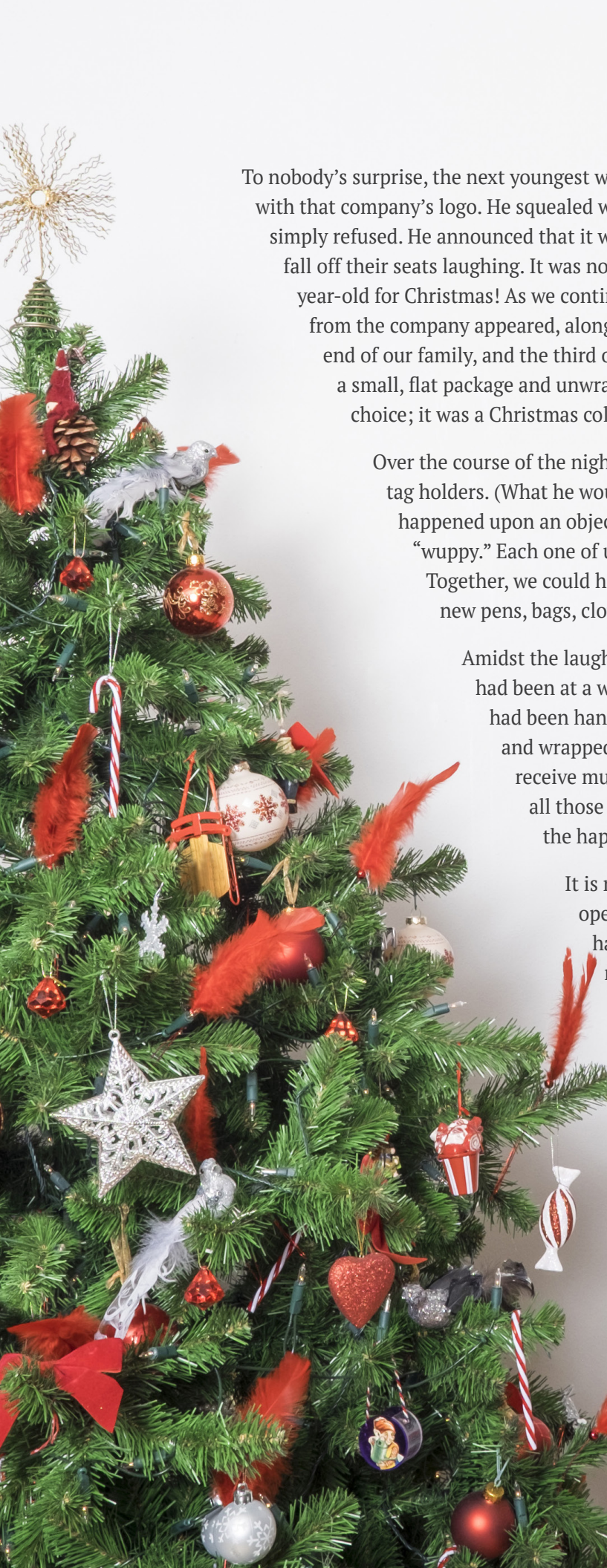
After the long wait, it finally came time for our Christmas celebration at home to begin as we arrived home from the Midnight Mass in the wee hours of Christmas morning. Sitting around the Christmas tree were little packages of different shapes and sizes; the scene brought to mind the maxim, “great things come in small packages.” In accord with our family tradition, we began to open our presents then and there, though it was almost two o’clock in the morning.

To start us off, Dad told us that, with the exception of a few presents, none of the gifts were for specific people; we would simply take turns picking a package and opening it. In the end, if people wanted to trade, that would be alright.

Dad decided to start with the youngest. She picked one of the largest presents. She opened it and a look of confusion spread over her little face. Inside were bright, little green balls sealed inside a clear bag with a company’s logo. She looked to Dad. He looked unsure and said he thought that it was a heating pad.







To nobody's surprise, the next youngest went for a small package. It held a small, black ball, again with that company's logo. He squealed with delight and tried to make the ball bounce, but it simply refused. He announced that it was "a broken bouncy ball," making all of the older kids fall off their seats laughing. It was not a bouncy ball; it was a stress reliever... given to a six-year-old for Christmas! As we continued to take our turns, numerous pens and note pads from the company appeared, along with more stress relievers. We made it to the older end of our family, and the third oldest, a sophomore in high school, was up. He picked a small, flat package and unwrapped it. He roared with laughter as he showed us his choice; it was a Christmas coloring book. Mom and Dad laughed themselves to tears.

Over the course of the night, one of my brothers received three extendable name tag holders. (What he would do with one, I do not know, but three!) Another happened upon an object none of us could explain, so he simply dubbed it a "wuppy." Each one of us received what seemed to be a lifetime supply of pens. Together, we could have been an advertisement for the company with our new pens, bags, clothing, and stress relievers.

Amidst the laughter over our strange presents, Dad explained that he had been at a work conference earlier that year, at which the company had been handing out, well, our future presents. So Dad took some and wrapped them as Christmas presents. Though we did not receive much else that year but our "wuppies," as we soon called all those funny presents, it has gone down in memories as one of the happiest Christmases of our lives.

It is now a tradition in our house at Christmas to end opening presents with the picking of the "wuppies" Dad has collected over the year. Though I love presents as much as ever, I know now that it is because of the kindness behind the gift, rather than the gift itself. For it was that year that I, and indeed all my family, truly realized that it was not the presents which make Christmas so special, but the love with which they are given.

---

**Natalie Pratt** is a junior from Niles, MI. She is the 6th of 9 children and loves little kids. She loves art projects like pencil drawing and jewelry-making, and enjoyed success in various crafts from a young age. She loves to creative writing as well. She also plays the piano and sings in a choir at her parish. She thrills while playing many sports, especially volleyball. She loves Christmas and is excited to celebrate it once again.



---

*Mission is never the fruit of a perfectly planned program or a well-organized manual. Mission is always the fruit of a life which knows what it is to be found and healed, encountered and forgiven. Mission is born of a constant experience of God's merciful anointing.*

---

*Pope Francis, Visit to Cuba 2015*







READ ON LINE ▶

*Honorable Mention:*

# LITTLE GIFTS OF LOVE: WHAT DOLLAR GENERAL TAUGHT ME ABOUT GIFT GIVING



TERESA REGNIER

**W**hen I was a little girl, my dad would bring my siblings and me to the Dollar General store around Thanksgiving to buy Christmas gifts for one another. The Dollar General was an ideal

place to shop because we could all buy presents for each family member without spending more money than we had in our piggybanks.

Upon entering the store, I would duck into an aisle that didn't have any siblings in it and start excitedly searching for the right gift for each person. This was

hard to do because the Dollar General has only so many things to offer. Nevertheless, I always found presents that were "just right."

One year the perfect gift for my mom was a ceramic coffee mug with a Bible verse on it. Another year it was a miniature remote control car for my little brother or a fountain pen for Dad. No matter what "treasures" I walked out with, I remember being so excited at the thought of my siblings' faces when they opened their gifts. It was a struggle to keep the gifts a surprise, and to prevent myself from bursting, I told my other siblings what every other person was getting.



When I got home, I immediately wanted to wrap the gifts up with the things I had on hand. Placing them in shoe boxes so that they would not get broken, I wrapped the presents in paper towels decorated with markers. Then I put the wrapped gifts in a hidden place, like under my bed or in the closet, and waited impatiently for Christmas. On Christmas morning as I placed each present into my family members' hands, I begged them to open my gift first, and watched with infinite satisfaction as each gift was unwrapped and admired.

This is how Daddy taught me to give gifts lovingly and joyfully, and it is surprisingly similar to the way God gave us the great gift of His Son two thousand years ago. Now, of course, God didn't buy Jesus at the Dollar General, but He did procure His gift from an equally unlikely place. Sending His angel Gabriel to a poor virgin, He asked Mary to be the mother of His Son. God obtained the gift of His Son's humanity from Mary when she said "yes" to Him. Mary was like the Dollar General; she did not appear to have much to offer, yet God found just what He was looking for in her.

Now that God's gift had become incarnate, He needed a place to hide this gift until Christmas. He chose one that was even more unique than under a bed or in a closet. For nine months He hid His infant Son in a virgin's womb. All that was left to do was to wait for Christmas!

But God could hardly contain His joy and anticipation in giving man this gift, and so He let Mary's cousin Elizabeth and Joseph in on the secret. When Christmas Eve finally came, God presented His gift to the world through Mary. The infant Christ Child was born, and Mary cared for Him using the things she had on hand. She placed Jesus in a humble feeding box and wrapped Him in strips of white cloth.

Just as I showed my family members their gifts and begged them to open my presents first, God invited

some shepherds and Wise Men to come see Jesus. He asked them to "unwrap" His gift, to experience the joy of His Son's divine presence. Watching the shepherds run from the stable shouting out praise and the Wise Men bowing down in adoration before His Son, God smiled with great satisfaction. His gift was received with appreciation and joy by those who knew and loved Him best.

So often today we forget that Christmas gifts don't need to be big and expensive. We spend the weeks preceding Christmas rushing around trying to find the newest, coolest gifts because we think that anything less is not good enough. But the beautiful part about gift-giving is that it is not about the gift itself.

Rather, it's about showing our loved ones how much we care about and appreciate them. The love we have for our family and friends is the real gift. When we realize this, buying Christmas presents does not become a chore or a stressful thing we have to do, but an exciting opportunity to show love to another person.

My Daddy taught me this lesson by bringing me to the Dollar General store for Christmas shopping. God taught the world this lesson by sending His Son from heaven to the womb of a humble virgin, and from Mary's womb to a stable in Bethlehem where Jesus was born to show the world the amazing love of the Father.

---

**Teresa Regnier** is a senior, the 3rd oldest of 7 children and has been homeschooled all her life. She is thankful for the solid Catholic education she receives at home. She has been enrolled in Seton's English, Reading, and Religion classes over the years, and is also taking American Government this year. She loves to play the piano, sing in the choir at her church, and read. She has always enjoyed science classes, and is planning on pursuing a degree in nursing at the University of Mary in Bismarck next fall.



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Honorable Mention:



ISABELLA ROLLINS

## GIFTS WITHOUT BOWS: SANTA'S WILL FOR MY LIFE

**H**ave you ever reminisced of Christmases long ago while you scanned through old pictures or videos? Remember when all you cared about at the time was what was inside the present from Santa?

I still recall the days when my only priority was to fall asleep on Christmas Eve and then jump out of bed at five in the morning to find the newest toy; the one I had been fantasizing about the entire year, sitting nicely wrapped under the Christmas tree. I would race down the stairs and tear through the living room to the long awaited toys. After all the gifts were freed from their papery bondage, I would proceed to separate them into two piles: the “good pile” that was filled with all the newest and most expensive gizmos and then the “bad pile” overflowing with socks from Grandma, a microscope

from my scientist uncle, and the different pairs of pajamas that my mom buys every year.

Ironically, around a month after Christmas, I often got bored with the new toys that I had waited for all year long. As the years have gone by, I realize that I am no longer awaiting the expensive gizmos, but am more anticipating the cute pair of socks that my grandmother sends carefully wrapped with love; and I am eager to find out what cute Christmas pajamas are waiting for me under the Christmas tree. Over the years, I have come to realize that the best gift doesn't come with a bow, but it is the gift of love that really counts.

As an only child for thirteen years, I had wanted a sibling for a great deal of time. Therefore, when



my mom told me that she was pregnant just two Christmases ago, I was overjoyed! I realized that news of a new life was the greatest gift that I could have ever received that Christmas. I have come to realize that I should not take any gift from God for granted because when I come to expect something to always be, God may remind me that He can take away His gifts.

For example, just about a month before my mom's due date, she noticed that the baby was not as active, so she decided to go to the doctor's office and make sure that everything was ok with her pregnancy. God reminded my family that the gift of life is truly a thing to be cherished when my mom's ultrasound turned into an emergency c-section. Fortunately, the doctor's decision brought our family a new bundle of joy! This experience gave us a new respect for the gifts of life and love that the Lord blesses each and every one of us with every day.

When I was younger, I would get mad if Santa did not give me all the gifts on my wish list. I would ask my mom if I was on the naughty list because I did not find all twenty-two toys wrapped nicely under the tree full of pine needles. My mom would tell me that Santa knew what toys I would have the most fun playing with and appreciate the most.

If I viewed Santa as God in this instance, I could easily identify the similarities between the will of Santa for my life and the will of God for my soul. For example, if Santa's will for me as a small child was that I should be happy, then Santa should do the best to keep me cheerful all year around. However, on occasion, Santa did not bring me a certain present because it was not in my best interest. God

will often act similarly in answering my prayers with one of three explanations: yes, not at the moment, and I have a better plan for you in mind. During my childhood, I learned to respect the decisions of Santa Claus, and accordingly should respect the choices of God's will in my life. My parents chose to teach me lessons through characters like Santa from which I have learned and have been able to apply to God's plan for my life.

As I have grown in knowledge and wisdom, I have found that I can attribute many stories from my childhood to God's will in my life. God wishes to give all of humankind gifts, and He does this by giving us the Sacraments, answering the prayers of His faithful, and by giving those who have received baptism the Fruits and Gifts of the Holy Spirit.

All in all, God loves us and wishes to give us the best life here on Earth, but His ultimate wish is for all His children to share in the joys of Heaven. I am continuing to realize that I should trust in God's plan because He often sends me gifts without bows.

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**Isabella Rollins** is originally from Illinois and moved to Camas, Washington, in 2008. She started homeschooling in third grade and is now enrolled in her first year of Seton high school. She has been involved in musical theater for six years, both as cast and crew. In addition to acting in plays, she recently competed on an improv team in San Diego, California. She has also been involved in the adult choir at her church for two years. She is a veteran horseback rider, and trains her neighbors' horses twice a week. Amongst all of her extracurricular activities, she still find time to hang with friends and family. She thanks God for each day, and tries to show appreciation for all the people He has put in her life.

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*During my childhood, I learned to respect the decisions of Santa Claus, and accordingly should respect the choices of God's will in my life.*



READ ON LINE ▶

*Honorable Mention:*

JOSEFA LINNELL

# CHOOSING TO BE GIFTED

## HOW I DISCOVERED THE WILL TO WRITE.

It is wasting away in the dusty corners of her heart. It hides in the dimming shadows of her soul. It is covering beneath the imperious pillars of her intellect. It is scurrying fearfully through the tangled forests of her imagination. It is her inspiration. It is intimidated by a single question.

In the back of the library, tucked away, a girl stares at the keyboard of the computer she is in front of. She asks herself: *What is the greatest gift we have been given?* Each individual has been given special talents, but what has the whole of humanity been blessed with? She considers. She knows there is an answer. She glances around.

She is in the library. Words? No. That is too generic. She looks at the shelves stocked with books. So many books. How many books, how many words, are not gifts to anyone and go unappreciated? She will never write a story that is a gift to the world. Her soul dims a little more because she knows this is true. She leaves. The next day she comes back to the library.

Once again, she feels that the books surrounding her intimidate her, close in on her like walls. All these stories with names, yet they remain nameless. *Is our*

*gift the ability to use words?* she asks herself. No, it cannot be. How many people have conceived an idea which was a gift to them, who intended their words as a gift, who thought they were gifted? Yet their words scorn or mock or die... fading into black on useless pages. What if her words do that? She shivers and leaves the library again. Why does she belittle herself like this?

When she returns to the library a final time, she wanders between the shelves as if they are a maze she will never escape from, because these books haunt her mind. She looks at all of the books again. She looks at all of the titles in gold print, in fancy script, in plain text. *What is our gift?*

She believes if she can answer this question, she can start using it. She believes the answer is in these shelves and she has to keep looking. But she has not written a word lately. So what is my gift? Her eye catches the title of *Pride and Prejudice* on a shelf nearby. As she moves closer to it, the titles of other classics pop out at her. These authors—Austen, Dickens, Homer—they were gifted, were they not?

She, the girl, has *Great Expectations*. She has *Pride and Prejudice*. She is ready for the *Odyssey*, but she



*God has already created  
the stories; it is we who must  
discover them and carve them out.*

just needs *Persuasion*. Where will she get it? Every word that comes to her mind rages around inside her in chaos, breaking her to pieces. They constantly tell her, themselves, that they are not good enough.

She is sinking deeper and deeper into darkness, like trying to battle through a dark wood. How will she find her way out? The words are supposed to bring joy. They are not supposed to make her miserable. Then she knows. Willpower. Willpower is our gift. This is the book she is supposed to write.

The authors of the great works on the shelf before her are considered the greatest authors of all time. But were they actually born gifted? Perhaps they simply had the will to write great stories. They had the *willpower* to write what *became* gifts to humanity. They made a choice to become what they did. They made a choice to be gifted.

The girl believes we all have stories within us to tell and to write and to share with the world. These stories are already good enough. God has already created the stories; it is we who must discover them and carve them out. This gift, willpower, is about writing even when it seems to prove pointless.

For these great authors, it was about believing in their own stories, being the only ones who did, for the *sake* of the story. It was about being willing to take the chance that they could get the world to believe in what only one person did before. It was about seeing what they wanted to become before they became it. *This* is our gift — making a choice to be great. The girl understands now, and she smiles, surrounded by the titles. The titles which sing to her now, beckon to her to write one that will join them in their stature. It is time to remove the gift from where it gathers dust in the corners of her heart, and *use* it. She is surrounded by the books, the great titles she is choosing to see and hopes to create. Their authors chose to be gifted. She can too.

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**Josefa Linnell** is in 11th grade and lives with her family on Cape Cod, MA. She has wanted to be a writer since she was six. It is hard for her to believe in her dream, but writing is her soul and identity. She has been published several times for her poetry, and won a scholarship to an adults' writing conference. She covers her local high school's boys' varsity basketball team for the town paper.





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We also want to take it to the next step, and so through the Bayley Bulletin, we are asking Seton graduates in colleges to write in about their experiences, as part of our **Embedded Grad** series.

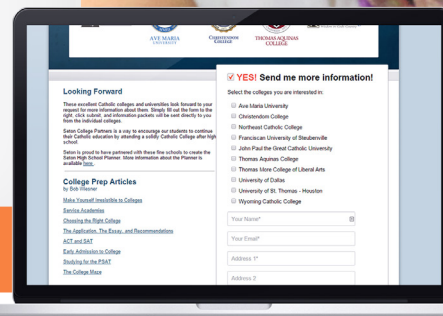
We also are excited to share with you **special articles from our Partner Colleges**, written specifically for you, our Seton high school students. This is another opportunity to get to know these colleges before visiting them. Be sure to subscribe to the Bayley Bulletin for these updates!

We also feature helpful articles from our Seton staff and high school counselors, rich with advice and ideas on how to get the most from your education, what tests to look forward to, and how to best succeed in college searches.

These excellent Catholic colleges and universities look forward to your request for more information.



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BOB WIESNER

## A PIECE OF HEAVEN IN HELL

### THE MORAL MIRACLE OF THE CHRISTMAS TRUCE

December 1914: The war of maneuver in Europe had already become the stalemate of the trenches. Millions of soldiers, French, English, Bavarian, Swabian, Scots and so many others, suffered the danger, discomfort, mud and cold of living in badly constructed holes in the frozen ground.

The war that was to end in a matter of weeks had become a war that would drag on for four more horrible years. And yet, in the midst of the misery, a moral miracle occurred with virtually no precedent: the Christmas truce of 1914.

No one knows for certain just how it began, but many accounts speak of the strains of *Stille Nacht* (Silent Night) coming from the German trenches early on Christmas Eve. A group of Scots



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*British and German troops meeting in no man's land during the unofficial truce*

Highlanders responded by singing the carol in English. Soon enough, Adeste Fideles rang out with both sides joining in the Latin hymn.

A German officer was heard to plead for no more shooting this night or the day after. Junior officers met in the devastation of No-Man's Land between the trenches and agreed upon a truce, a truce sanctioned by no one in higher command save God Himself. One estimate of the numbers involved gives a figure of no fewer than one hundred thousand soldiers!

In virtually no time at all, groups of soldiers from both sides began to congregate between the trenches, exchanging souvenirs and gifts, coffee and tobacco; bottles of whiskey and Schnapps soon appeared, followed by delicacies from the Christmas packages from home. A soccer ball was found, triggering a match which most agree was won by the Germans, 3-2.

More soberly, the chaplains from each army met and jointly provided decent burial for all the dead

between the lines who could be recovered at no other time. Arrangements were made for proper Christmas services to be held, both Catholic and Protestant. Ruined barns were soon transformed into chapels; efforts were made to decorate and insulate against the pervasive cold. Unbelievably, soldiers from several warring states peaceably celebrated the Savior's birth together in complete harmony!

Of course, generals were outraged and at least one priest was severely reprimanded by his bishop and sent home to England. Some courts-martial were held on both sides of the conflict.

Still, for one brief magical moment on one of the holiest days in the calendar, heaven descended and reigned over a small corner of hell on earth.

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Bob Wiesner earned a B.A. in Philosophy from Christendom College and his M.A. in Theological Studies from Maryknoll School of Theology. His passions include classical music, iconography and history. He is a member of Seton staff.





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SABRINA OLOMI

# A FRESHMAN'S 7 TIPS TO STAYING ON TRACK IN HIGH SCHOOL

One of the most important and probably the most challenging tasks for high school students is staying on track. True, this is very difficult, but there are many tips to help you. These are the methods that work for me.

## 1. KNOW WHERE YOU ARE IN RELATION TO THE SCHOOL YEAR.

Learning from my older siblings, and in my own short experience, it's very important to know what week you are on, and know what week you should be on.

Sometimes, it's easy to forget where you are in relation to the school year; sometimes you might even think you are on track. However, when the first semester ends, or when summer break nears, the reality hits you that you are really behind and need to catch up on a lot of school work.

So, know where you are in relation to the school year because it will save you from a lot of catching up to do.

## 2. KNOW HOW MUCH WORK YOU DID IN A DAY.

Writing in my teacher plan book really helps me know if I did enough work in a school day. I try to log in what I did for each subject; that way by the end of the day I know what I did. Often, I think that I did enough school work, when really I didn't.

Looking over what school work I did in

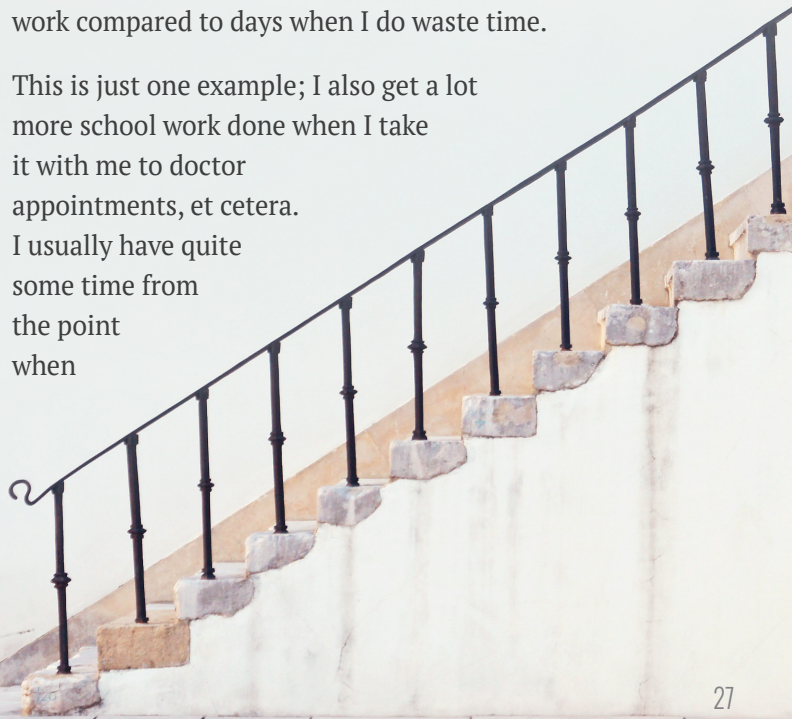
my teacher plan book shows me if I was productive in the day. In addition to writing what school I did, I also put a check mark by the day if I think I did a constructive amount of work. By the end of the week, I can see if the majority of days were productive, and if not, I know that next week I need to try harder.

## 3. DON'T WASTE TIME.

My siblings and I all take lessons on the same musical instruments. That means that I usually have about thirty minutes or so between the end of one class and the beginning of a new one.

Not wasting time is definitely a struggle for me, and since the teachers come to our house, it's easy for me to find things other than school to do in that thirty minute time gap. However, there have been days when I do school within that time, and by the end of the day, I find that I have done a lot more work compared to days when I do waste time.

This is just one example; I also get a lot more school work done when I take it with me to doctor appointments, et cetera. I usually have quite some time from the point when





I'm brought into the room, to when the doctor comes. Instead of being bored trying to find something to do, pack school and get work done.

## 4. IF YOU GET BEHIND, DON'T TRY TO CRAM TO CATCH UP.

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Life is full of surprises! No matter how hard you try, you are, at one point, going to get a little behind. That's okay, because you can always catch up.

But, you do want to be careful not to cram; that will eventually do you more harm than good.

Firstly, you'll probably end up getting really tired before your school day is over. Secondly, you most likely will not remember the information. And thirdly, cramming will not help you enjoy your high school experience because you will constantly be stressed about getting the work done. I find that it's easier to catch up when I do two days of the subject, and, if I feel like I completely understand the information, I do one more.

If you work on catching up two days at a time, you will find that you are back on track quickly, and you also remember that information better.

## 5. TRY TO GET AHEAD IF YOU CAN.

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Like I said before, you will have days when you will not get as much school done as you would like. To prepare for days like those, try to get ahead. If you are up to it, double up on some days. If you find yourself bored on a Saturday, do some school and get ahead.

Then, when you are unexpectedly sick, or you can't do school for some reason, you won't have to fret about getting behind.

## 6. DO SCHOOL AT THE LIBRARY.

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When I'm at home, I get distracted really easily. Especially now that all my siblings and I are in high school, we have started going to the library often. This is a big help mainly because there isn't really much to do at the library, except read. Plus, the library provides a quiet atmosphere, one that home may not provide. My siblings and I also study at the library with some friends, and that gives me something to look forward to besides doing school.

## 7. MOTIVATE YOURSELF, AND DON'T BE AFRAID TO WORK IN SUMMER.

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I have a success chart in my room, and when I have a productive day, I put a sticker on it. I know it might seem childish, but it helps me to look forward to completing the success chart and then get a reward for having X amount of productive days. Also, my siblings and I like getting a reward for finishing a school subject.

My family usually takes a vacation when everyone else is in school, so we already know that we will have to do some work when summer comes. But that is the beauty of homeschooling; you're not bound to a strict schedule. Don't be afraid to do school in summer. I always think I'll be working my day away at my books, but every time I have a great summer.

I hope these tips give you ideas on how to stay on track; or maybe you do some of these, and now you know you're not the only home-schooler using these methods! I will be praying for all you Seton high schoolers out there! Can you add another tip to my list?

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**Sabrina Olomi** is a thirteen-year-old freshman who loves to sing, play piano and guitar, sew, paint, craft, read, and write. Sabrina also likes to do different hairstyles with her older sister. She loves Mother Teresa, Fulton Sheen, St. Francis, and St. Paul. Sabrina enjoys entertaining little toddlers; and one day hopes to make a business involving the little ones, hairstyling, and sewing.



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MICHELE SUNER

# FROM SETON TO COLLEGE

## MAKING THE MOST OF YOUR COLLEGE EXPERIENCE

When I graduated from Seton in May, I wasn't sure what to expect from the road ahead. I had known only Seton in all of my years of schooling, and transitioning to Florida International University, a very large and very secular university, seemed daunting.

FIU was the most convenient university for me to attend—the school is very close by where I live so I would not have to leave my family; I received a full scholarship; and it was the only college in Florida that had my desired major. The downside was that it is definitely—and I mean *definitely*—not Catholic at all.

The transition proved to be easier than expected. As

I finish my first semester, I find myself feeling more organized, more connected, and even more confident in fighting for my Faith than ever before.

In the course of my transition, I have learned a few skills that I hope will be valuable to all college students, previously homeschooled or not. I have also found myself debunking quite a few homeschooling myths along the way.

In the following sections, I will talk about a few strategies that worked for me, in the hope that I can help you get the most out of your college experience, even in a secular setting.



## 1. MAKE YOURSELF KNOWN

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The first skill that I had to acquire coming into the college experience was the skill of making myself known; that is, making sure to develop a more personal relationship with my professors.

This seems to have been easier for me than for others—I’ve even been called an “overachiever” by traditionally-schooled acquaintances I’ve made, simply because I like to sit in the front of the class and ask questions.

In my experience, professors like it when you go to their office hours, ask questions, or just show an interest in the subject in general. Hiding in the background, whether you are doing well or not, will not let them know that you are really interested in what they have to say. Too many of my peers don’t show their interest in achieving even a passing grade, and even more of them disrespect professors outright.

My ease in talking to adults was a major advantage of homeschooling. Since most social experiences during my homeschool years consisted of talking to people of many different age groups, including adults, I already knew how to talk to people besides those of my own age.

I played a little game with the minds of my peers and professors at the beginning of the semester: I didn’t tell them that I had been homeschooled. Of course, at least in my very large university, most people don’t even care where you went to high school anymore. It’s almost like you have a clean slate to start over on. Because of that, no one ever asked. But when they did...

“You were homeschooled?”—and in a very secretive stage whisper, implying that I could bare my deepest insecurities and doubts—“*Did you like it?*”

“Yes,” I always answer, truthfully—and, gritting my teeth, I steel myself for the inevitable next question:

“Did you have a prom?”

They are always surprised when I tell them I had two proms, with two different local homeschool groups. Perhaps it is their first time being confronted head-on by the fact that the myth about “socialization” is simply not true.

If the students are surprised, the professors are even more. Before they knew about my educational background, they were surprised at the respect I showed them and my efforts to seek their advice, which they were very happy to give. Then they asked.

One professor, in particular, was very surprised and asked many questions about homeschooling. The fact that I had already shown myself to be socially adept and educationally advanced opened up her mind to the idea of homeschooling as an effective form of education.

The point of all this is to say: just be yourself and show your enthusiasm for your









education. In addition to helping you get the most of your college experience, this strategy can help prove to professors and peers that we homeschoolers are well-equipped to handle the educational and social components of college.

## 2. KEEPING A SCHEDULE

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One of the hardest aspects for many of us is probably the fact that there are many deadlines to keep. In my experience, the worst kind of assignment is the one that doesn't count for much and doesn't take much effort.

The temptation is to leave it until the night before it's due. It won't take that long, will it? The thing is, you don't really know until you start exactly how long that assignment is going to take.

Also, these little assignments add up; and what seemed like a little work here, a little work there is now a night of bleary-eyed, feverish hurry as your brain jumps from one "little" thing to the other in an effort to finish them all—and most probably, none of them will be the kind of quality that you can produce at your best.

The most effective way I've found to avoid this is to take care of assignments the day they're assigned. I actually somehow fool my brain into thinking that it's due that same day. When I'm done, there's an indescribable relief—the deadline is not until much later, but the assignment is already done. If your school requires you to submit assignments online, you can even submit it right away and be completely done.

The other key is to just produce. I learned pretty quickly that I had to produce work at a much faster rate than ever before. I'm quite a perfectionist, so this was a big hurdle for me to jump. I wanted

everything to be perfect on the first try, and with the time I have, that is simply not possible.

My solution to this was to avoid over-thinking the assignments. However, this is a habit that should not wait until college! Developing it earlier would have helped me immensely in high school, but I realize now that it is much more effective to add quality to my work after it's already on the page.

I think one of the other misconceptions about homeschooling is the assumption that we never had any deadlines or assignments before, and that we wouldn't know how to deal with deadlines. However, when my peers and professors found out I was homeschooled, I think the question was very far from their minds—I had already proven myself.

Even though it might be a big transition from all the freedom we had with homeschooling, it can be manageable with a few changes of habit.

## 3. KEEPING YOUR FAITH

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We need to keep the strong Catholic education that was imparted to us by Seton. This would definitely be easier in a strong Catholic university, but even in a secular setting, it can be done. Since I knew I would be going to a secular college, I prepared myself to answer theological or philosophical questions. However, I haven't yet been in a situation where I would have to use logical arguments—most "arguments" nowadays consist of bathos and moral relativism. I think that the most effective thing to do at this point in my life is to evangelize by example.

First, it is always a good idea to seek out other Catholics, as it can be comforting to know that you are not alone. I joined the Catholic campus ministry at FIU. The group has Masses and Confession on



campus every week, formation talks, retreats, and Catholic volunteering opportunities. Overall, I found it to be a very solid group.

Secondly, it is important to understand that being holy means being consecrated or set apart. I try not to spend any time trying to fit in—wanting to be like everyone else and doing what they do would make it easier to fall to temptations. As Catholics, we are called to be different from everyone else. It needs to be apparent in the way we speak, the way we dress, the friends we have, and what we hold to be absolutely true no matter what the world says.

#### 4. ADVANTAGES OF A SETON EDUCATION

I believe that I made the transition more smoothly than expected because of the many advantages Seton (and Catholic homeschooling in general) have given me.

The independence that is expected of college students seems to have boggled the minds of my institutionalized classmates, and they spend their time asserting their “freedom” by doing all the wrong things. Homeschooling gave me independence from the start—the freedom to choose to do the right and responsible thing.

It also gave me a strong family bond in a setting where many of my peers are trying to break free from the influence of their parents.

Homeschooling also gave me the ability to think outside the box. My heart aches when I hear my classmates stating that they are trying to “find themselves” in college, all the while trying too hard to fit in with everyone else.

Homeschooling by its nature can give us the courage to stand out, to be unique, to not follow the status

quo, and to not put on a mask to fit in. Thinking outside the box also gives an advantage when it comes to projects or assignments.

Another advantage that homeschooling gave me was the time to pursue my interests. This is not only an advantage when choosing a career that you are truly interested in, but this also helped me right away. For example, one of my projects was to create a video with a group.

Since I had spent some of my time editing and filming videos with my sister in my free time while homeschooling, I was confident that I would be able to film the group’s videos and audio, compile them, add music, and edit them together.

The most important advantage was Seton’s rigorous curriculum. The coursework that I had with Seton was much more intellectually stimulating than what I am doing now.

Not only is the rigor advantageous, but so is the vast wealth of background knowledge that I’ve acquired from having used Seton all my life. For example, in my first-level English class, we were told to analyze a paper for word choice and poetic devices.

I immediately channeled all of the knowledge I had from the Seton poetry and English tests, and I wrote two pages about the alliteration, assonance, word order and connotation in the passage.

Then we were told to pass the paper to another person for them to review. I hadn’t expected that (I was hoping to have it be seen only by the professor). After furrowing her eyebrows thoughtfully, laboriously reading my two pages of verbosity, my peer reviewer looked up and said slowly, “You sound really smart.” I thought to myself, “Thanks, Seton!”

Another “Thanks, Seton!” moment occurred in that



same class, where the professor asked a question about an Emerson essay, and I was able to express, thanks to Seton's American Literature course, the flawed viewpoint of the Transcendentalists. That sparked a dialogue between the professor and me while the other students asked what we were talking about.

There have been many other "Thanks, Seton!" moments throughout my first semester, and I am so grateful for the existence of this rigorous Catholic curriculum. Seton has equipped me to succeed academically, grow spiritually, and fight for the truth.

I believe that all of us Seton students will be able to go out into the world and bring more souls to Christ by our example—and combining this with the intellectual rigor Seton has given to us, we can truly

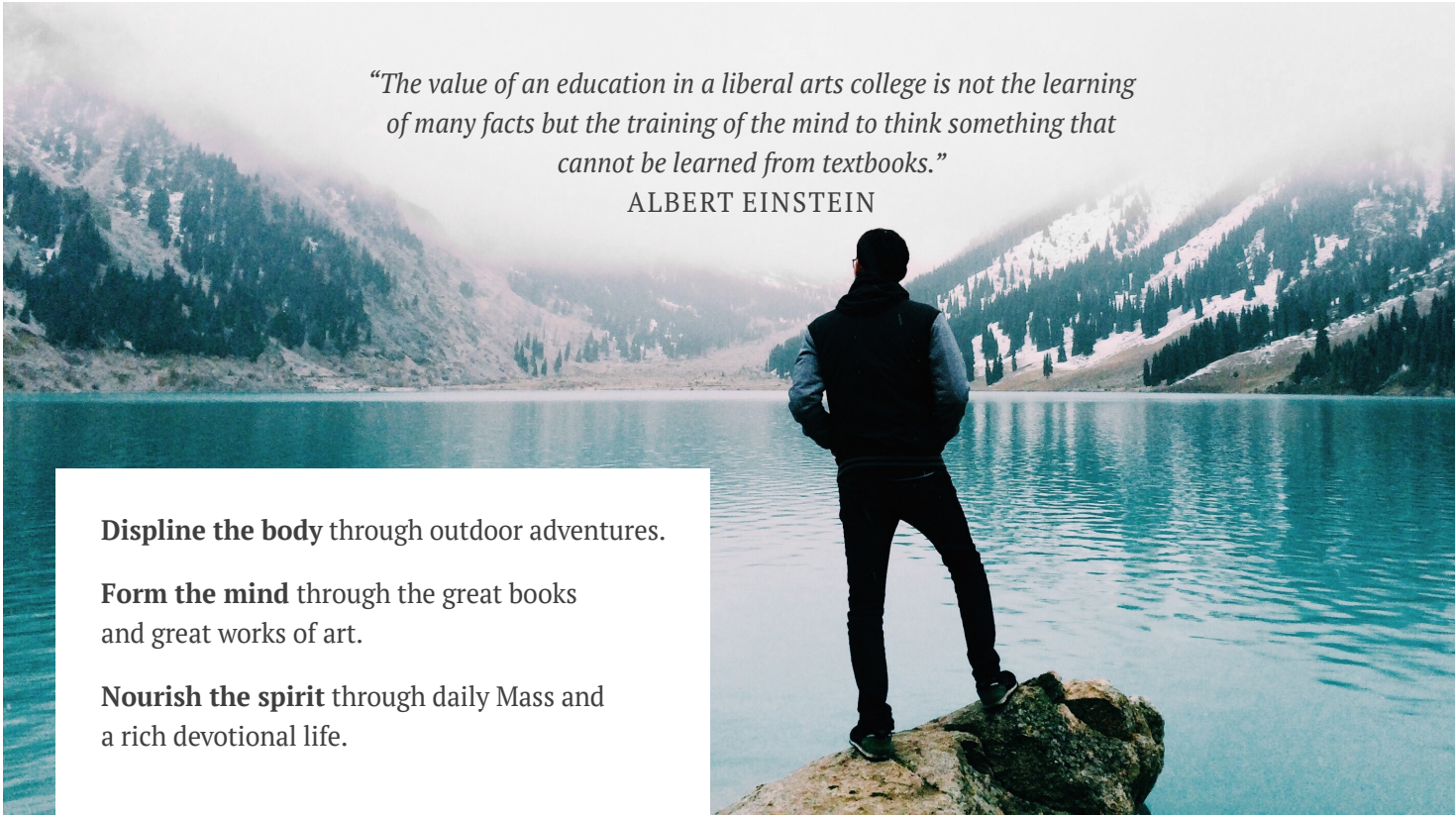
make the most of not only our educational paths but the rest of our lives.

When we continue the legacy of strong Catholic homeschooling that we have been given, we have a powerful ability to influence the next generation.

Everywhere we go, Catholic homeschoolers can truly be the light in the shadows of our dark and muddled world.

---

**Michele Suner** is a Seton alumna who recently graduated from thirteen years of a Seton education. She is now attending Florida International University and intends to pursue an advanced degree in linguistics with a minor in music. Her goal is to become a combined speech and music therapist, combining her many passions.



*"The value of an education in a liberal arts college is not the learning of many facts but the training of the mind to think something that cannot be learned from textbooks."*

ALBERT EINSTEIN

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# A HOMESCHOOLER IN COLLEGE

## 4 WAYS I'M GRATEFUL FOR SETON



ANNA EILEEN

When I was deep in the trenches of junior year and studying for hours upon hours, I have to admit that gratitude was not on the top of the list of emotions that I felt toward Seton's curriculum.

I felt as if I were writing papers and studying Latin constantly, and while I found most of it interesting, I got burned out on occasion.

If you are a current Seton high schooler, I'm sure that you can relate. Seton's high school program is challenging, but it is so, so worth it, and I would like to offer you some reassurance that all your hard work will pay off in a big way.

In my first semester as a homeschooler in college, I have reflected upon the following ways that I am thankful for Seton.

### 1. SETON TAUGHT ME HOW TO WRITE.

Most of my writing assignments do not take me very long, and I do pretty well on them. Other Seton graduates at my school have had the same experience.

It is pretty impossible to go through Seton and not improve your writing significantly. Whether it's filling out *English for Young Catholics* worksheets year after year or writing book analysis after book analysis, completing Seton's writing curriculum is excellent training in writing.

I am very thankful that I had the opportunity for such thorough training in high school, so that I can use it to my advantage in my higher education.

However, don't think that, because you are obtaining a science degree, Seton's liberal-arts-heavy curriculum won't help you. The advantages provided by Seton's rigorous writing training extend to all fields of study.



As a nursing major, I will not only have to take two composition classes, but will write care plans for patients, as well as essays for many of my classes.

Knowing how to write well is an invaluable life skill, and thanks to Seton, I was able to learn how to do so before starting my college career.

## 2. THE BALTIMORE CATECHISM HAS LEFT AN INDELIBLE MARK ON MY MIND.

If you attend a Catholic college, you will recognize much of your theology material from the Baltimore Catechism and other Seton religion classes. Believe me when I say that reviewing the essentials of Catholic doctrine every year will prove to be such a big advantage.

Another very significant advantage to Seton's religion curriculum is that you will be able to understand and defend your Faith. Even if you attend a Catholic school, there will be non-Catholic students, and being well-informed is essential to respectful, fruitful dialogue.

## 3. BEING HOMESCHOOLED TAUGHT ME HOW TO READ A TEXTBOOK.

As all former and current Seton high schoolers can attest, Seton's history and science courses require a lot of independent textbook reading. I remember being in ninth grade and thinking how strange it was that the lesson plans assigned very small reading assignments each day. Soon, I began to see the wisdom in that.

Seton's history and science courses taught me the necessity of reading dense material in small increments. Without a teacher to give daily lectures, it was absolutely essential for me to comprehend the textbook.

Now that I do learn from lectures on a daily basis, I can see how easy it would be to become dependent

on verbal instruction, when in reality, lectures are just one way of learning the necessary material.

Because of my high school experience, reading my college textbooks has come a lot more easily to me than I expected.

## 4. SETON EXPOSED ME TO GREAT LITERATURE.

Good news, Seton high schoolers: there will come a day when you will be grateful for English 11!

Last week, I signed up for my Spring semester classes. One of the classes I will be taking is English Composition II. Looking at the required books, I discovered that I had already read and analyzed two out of the three plays that are read in that class!

Certainly, having already analyzed the material will be a huge advantage. However, the benefits of Seton's literature classes go beyond that. A lot of college and/or scholarship applications require an essay, often about a piece of literature of the applicant's choice.

Those were the easiest types of application essays for me to write, and the ones about which I felt most confident.

I hope that, by writing this post, I am providing some hope for those who might feel overwhelmed by Seton's high school program. Any quality college-prep high school is going to be a challenge, and Seton is no exception.

One day, though, when you upload that final test and pack your bags for college, perhaps you will, like me, be thankful for the advantages that being a Seton graduate has to offer.

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**Anna Eileen** is a member of the Seton Home Study School Class of 2014. She is currently a freshman nursing major at Aquinas College in Nashville, TN. When she is not studying, you can usually find her cycling, listening to music, or spending time with family and friends.



READ ON LINE ▶



## ALUMNI PROFILE: SARAH FREDDINO

### *How long were you homeschooled through Seton, and what did you like about the experience?*

I was homeschooled through Seton from 3rd – 12th grade. I went to a public highschool for 11th grade, but I felt like I was losing who I truly was while I was there, so I returned to Seton for my final year.

There were so many things I liked about the experience. My absolute favorite aspect of using Seton was that it truly was *Catholic*.

I learned so much about my faith using Seton, and not only did I learn about my faith, but I learned how to apply it to my life.

This was so important to me because after I graduated from Seton I was able to really take my faith and continue to grow in it, having that beautiful foundation laid in Seton.

### *Where did you go to college, and what is your degree?*

I am currently a Senior at Franciscan University of Steubenville in Ohio pursuing studies towards a B.A. in Theology and Catechetics.

### *Did your Seton education help you navigate the college experience?*

It definitely has helped me. Seton, first of all, gave me an incredible foundation in my Catholic faith. This was where I first encountered Christ, and things I learned about the faith years ago through Seton have stuck with me and influenced my life ever since.

Additionally, my experience in Theology with Seton is what really inspired me to major in Theology now in college. It is something I have grown intensely passionate about, and something I truly desire to continue to grow in and spread to the entire world.

Second of all, Seton helped me grow in self-discipline. Because it was up to me to finish all of my work on time and do it well when I was home schooled, that discipline has carried through to my time in college. I continue to set goals for myself in college and I am very disciplined with my work, thanks to what Seton has given me.

Finally, the writing skills... When I was using Seton, there were many times I would resent Seton for the insane amounts of writing and the extremely challenging writing assignments I was given. However, now all I can say to Seton is “thank you.”



I don't know how I would have survived writing college essays if I didn't first have the challenging experience of writing with Seton.

### *What are you doing now?*

I am in my last year at Franciscan University in Steubenville, OH pursuing a degree in Theology and Catechetics. I also lead the Ministry to the Mentally Challenged on campus, and am involved in many different activities and ministries on campus. I have grown so much since my time with Seton, and am continuing to grow, but I am forever grateful for all of the skills Seton has given me, for I am truly putting them to use today.

### *What gives you passion or motivation in your current occupation?*

As a student, what gives me passion and motivation is my love for the Lord, and my desire to spread His love to everyone I encounter. Sometimes I can get so discouraged, and there are definitely moments

where I feel inadequate, or I feel as if I am not worthy to teach the Catholic faith; however, I know that God has called me to this specific mission, and knowing this gives me hope and determination to continue on and fight the good fight!

### *Any advice for current Seton High-Schoolers?*

I know that Seton is challenging, and I know you may feel like giving up, but I promise that you will never regret sticking to this program. I can honestly tell you that I don't know what kind of person I would be today if I had not studied with Seton, but I can tell you that I am happy with the person I am now, and I owe part of who I am to Seton. This program has given me so many gifts and skills, and they continue to help me today, nearly 4 years after my graduation. So I promise you, if you stick with Seton and keep on pushing on, even in the most difficult moments, so much goodness and beauty will come from it!

*Are you a Seton alum? Share your profile at [bayleybulletin.com/profile](http://bayleybulletin.com/profile)*



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Topics include how you find and work with scholarships, how you handle jobs in high school, your experience in ending and beginning high school, how sports inspires and helps you, how you stay on track.

## ALUMNI PROFILE

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Be featured in our showcase and inspire other Seton high schoolers. Simply answer the 6 questions in this section and submit to us.

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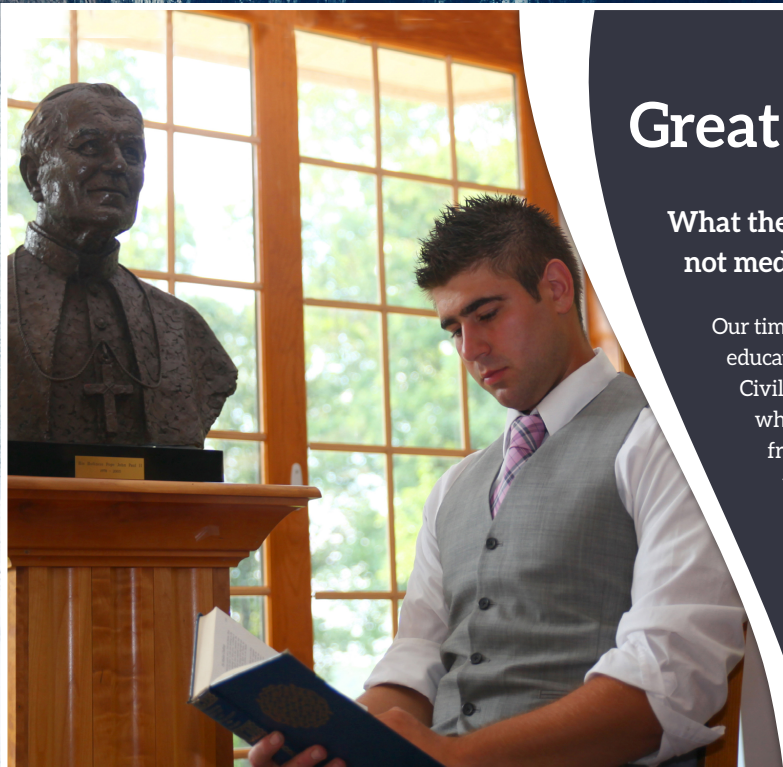
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