

Marist High School Band



Band Alumni Bulletin

Issue #8

September 30, 2025



A Letter from the Director

Dear Marist Band Alumni Members,

I would like to welcome all of you to the eighth issue of the Marist Band Alumni Bulletin! This bulletin will be used to help keep alumni band members updated about what is currently happening with the band program at Marist.

The band returned to school in late June to start preparing for our upcoming marching season. We hosted an Incoming Freshmen Band Camp, Grade School Band Camp, Drumline Camp, and Full Band Camp. The students have done tremendous work over the summer, and we have been having a great marching season! We are also currently working on planning for our upcoming **Disney World and Universal Studios Band Tour in April 2026!**

For this eighth issue, we are highlighting our Hawaii Band Tour experience, asking for information from Marist Band alumni who are in college, announcing some upcoming performances and events, as well as interviewing band alum and Blackhawk Middle School Band Director, Bill Winters. I hope you enjoy the feature!

I want to thank you for interest in the band, and I look forward to communicating with all of you. We plan to release this bulletin on a seasonal basis. If you know of any other Marist Band alumni who would like to receive this bulletin, please have them contact me directly via e-mail at creagh.andrew@marist.net. Thank you again for all your support!

Sincerely,

Mr. Andrew Creagh '04

Band Director, Marist High School

CURRENT STUDENT FEATURE

Kenny Dewes

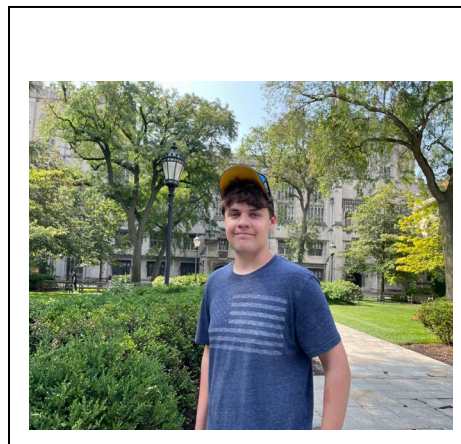
Graduation Year-2027

Grammar School? St. Catherine of Alexandria

Instrument? Trombone

What is your favorite thing about band?

Definitely the yearly band tour. I love how it is not only an opportunity to spread music around the country, and sometimes internationally, but I enjoy spending time with other members of the band.



What are some other clubs, activities, and sports do you participate in? I am a member of the jazz band, math team, and academic team.

What is your favorite band moment so far?

My favorite band moment is the exhilarating minutes before the pre-game show during the Marist vs. Brother Rice game. It was even cooler during my first ever football game that I played in. It was great seeing both stands packed with fans.

What was your favorite moment from our Hawaii Band Tour?

I think that the Hawaii Band Tour reached its peak during the Vietnam Veteran's Day Parade. The opportunity to play music in a parade that celebrates those who did not get the appreciation they deserved following the Vietnam War was a very exciting event for me, and the enthusiasm of all the band members after the parade ended was amazing as well.

College plans?

I am a junior, so I am unsure of which colleges that I am going to apply to yet. However, I do plan on majoring in STEM, particularly with some sort of Engineerings. My dream college is MIT.

Hawaii Band Tour Recap

Hawaii Band Tour-March 25, 2025-March 31, 2025

Tuesday, 3/25-Flight to Hawaii

The band students arrived at Marist by 5:30 a.m. They brought their suitcases to the band room for inspection, instrument loading, and marching uniform loading. We then loaded the buses and headed to O'Hare airport at 5:50 a.m. When we arrived, the students checked in our luggage and instruments, and headed to our gate. Our flight was at 9:50 a.m. The 9-hour flight to Honolulu went very smoothly, and the students did a great job.

When we arrived in Honolulu, we met our tour director, **Kilifili Alaiasa**. He led us to baggage claim and to our buses. Then, we headed to our hotel, Holiday Inn Express Waikiki. Our hotel was nice, although it was difficult using the elevators since all 6 high school bands were in the same hotel. The students adjusted well, and were on time for all our call times. After we checked in to the hotel, the students went off in chaperone groups for dinner. We were lucky that a group of food trucks was a few blocks away from the hotel, so many groups went to eat there. They had about 10 food trucks serving local food and general food that the kids enjoyed, like burgers, hot dogs, tacos, etc.

After all the groups arrived back at the hotel, the kids went up to bed for room inspections. Each night, the chaperones inspected the rooms, and taped the doors. The band had no issues or complaints from the hotel or guests, so I was very proud of them.

Wednesday, 3/26-Pearl Harbor

The students woke up at 5:30 a.m. For breakfast, each day at the hotel, they had a buffet that served eggs, sausage, pulled pork, cereal, muffins, rolls, pancakes, etc. We were able to eat in a large breakfast area, which was great. At 7:00 a.m., we headed to Pearl Harbor. For dress, the students wore their black band t-shirts and comfortable clothes for our performance.

Since there were other high school bands performing throughout the day at the USS Missouri, we had to adjust our plans because many of the bands started late. I talked to a few directors, and there seemed to be confusion about music stands and chairs and equipment, so one of the bands started two hours late, and every other band had to adjust our times. We actually performed at 1:00 p.m. instead of 9:00 a.m.

Instead of heading directly to the USS Missouri, we toured the Pearl Harbor park area, and took a ferry over to the USS Arizona. This was a great experience for the students, and they were very respectful and attentive. It was great to see how interested the students were with the experience, and I'm glad they felt the impact and importance of the gravesite.

After the USS Arizona, the band loaded the coach buses and headed over to the USS Missouri. We first toured the ship and had time in the area to eat lunch and watch two other bands who performed before us. Then, we headed back to our equipment truck to gather our instruments and prepare for our performance.

While we were setting up, the organizers asked if we could march in to the USS Missouri performance area since we were the largest band, and they thought it would be a great "attention-grabber" for the guests. We thought it was a unique way to make an entrance, so we lined up, adjusted our squads so the students marched in by 2's to fit, and marched through and performed "National Emblem" in route to our performance. It was a truly memorable experience, and the students did a great job!

Once we arrived at our staging area, the band set up and performed the following pieces:

- National Emblem
- You Belong With Me
- Uprising
- I Want It That Way
- South Side Irish
- Drum Circle
- Marist Fight Song

The students did a great job, especially since we had not played our instruments together in over a week. We had many Marist families in attendance, as well as guests of the USS Missouri. I heard so much great feedback from everyone about well the band performed and how fun the performance came across to the audience. After the performance, the students loaded the equipment truck, and headed back to our hotel.

When we got back to the hotel, the students changed quickly and we all headed to Waikiki Beach. We were at the beach for several hours. Many students swam in the ocean, while others hung out in the sand, and the open park area with volleyball courts.

After the beach, the students broke off into groups with the chaperones, ate dinner in the area, and headed back to the hotel. When the students arrived back at the hotel around 8:00 p.m., they headed up to their rooms for room inspection.

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Thursday, 3/27-Polynesian Cultural Center

The students woke up at 7:00 a.m. and headed down for breakfast. After breakfast, we headed to the Polynesian Cultural Center. The 1.5 hour bus ride was beautiful and scenic. We actually drove past some areas where the Jurassic Park movies were filmed.

When we arrived at the Polynesian Cultural Center, the students were able to eat a quick lunch in the shopping area. After that, the students received their tickets, and headed into the Polynesian Cultural Center. This was a GREAT experience for the kids, and it was nice because the students were able to tour the areas in small groups without chaperones. The following islands and cultures were represented in the park: Hawaii, Samoa, Aotearoa (New Zealand), Fiji, Tonga, and Tahiti.

After the students explored the island areas, we all met and headed to our buffet dinner. The students had many options for food, so it was a nice experience. After dinner, the students were able to hang out in the shopping area and a bit, and then we headed to The Breath of Life Show at the Pacific Pavilion. This was a great show, and the students seemed to really enjoy it. After the show, we headed back to the buses, drove to our hotel, and the students went up to their rooms for room inspection and lights out.

Friday, 3/28-Circle Island Tour

The students woke up at 5:45 a.m. and came down for their breakfast at the hotel. After breakfast, we got on the buses and had our Circle Island Tour on coach buses. The coach buses drove us around the perimeter of the island, and had us stop off at some key locations to view the scenery and take pictures. At our first stop, the students were actually able to spot a pod of whales in the ocean.

After we were out for a few hours, we stopped in a small town that had many options for lunch. The students ate lunch, headed back on the bus, and made a few more stops. We skipped two of the stops towards

the end because one featured macadamia nuts and our tour guide told us the other one wasn't really worth the stop.

When we finished the tour, the students went back to the hotel and prepared for dinner and the beach. It was really nice because we arrived at the beach later at night, and every Friday, there are fireworks on Waikiki beach. We enjoyed the fireworks, and headed back to the hotel for room inspection and lights out.

Saturday, 3/29-Vietnam Veteran's Day Ceremony & Parade

On Friday, the students woke up around 7:30 a.m., and came down to breakfast at 8:30 a.m. Then, the students broke into groups with their chaperones and explored the city and beach. After lunch, around 1:00 p.m., the students came back to the hotel to rest for a few hours before our performance at the Vietnam Veteran's Day ceremony and parade.

Mr. Keelan and I were having conversations throughout the week about the weather, and how difficult it would be for our students to perform and march in their full marching uniforms. We decided that it would be best if the students wore their Marist Band Hawaiian shirts and comfortable clothes due to the heat and for being outside and performing for about 6-7 hours.

The pre-ceremony was held at Fort Derussy Park, which was located near our hotel. We walked over to the park, warmed up a bit in the shade, and prepared for our performance. This event lasted about an hour and a half, and the students stood and performed "The Star Spangled Banner" and "God Bless America" with all the bands who were participating in the parade. It was a great event, and we were lucky to have **Alex Klockow '25** and **Jessica Ekhardt '25** present leis to the veterans in attendance.

After the parade, we went back to the shade of the trees while our tour director waited on the parade route to cue us to come over. We were number 45 in the parade. We lined up on the street, and marched for about 1 mile down Kalakaua Avenue. The students played “National Emblem” for the occasion.

Following the parade, all the bands went Kapiolani Park and were given dinner and had a brief awards ceremony for the bands. All the bands received a tiki trophy and medals for all the student participants. This was a nice event, and the students were even able to dance to the music from the DJ. After that, we took shuttle buses back to the hotel and prepared for packing and room inspection.

Sunday, 3/30 & 3/31-Final Days in Hawaii and Departure Flights

The students were up at 7:30 a.m. and ate breakfast. Then, the band walked a mile to St. Augustine By The Sea Church, where the students attended Mass. It was a great Mass, and the priest was very welcoming and accommodating to our group. After Mass, we headed back to the hotel, checked out of the hotel, stored our instruments in a storage room, and went with chaperones to explore the city.

The students were out for a few hours, met back at the hotel, and relaxed before heading to the airport. Then, we loaded our coach buses and drove to Honolulu airport.

When we arrived, the students had to scan their luggage and bags for agriculture, and checked their bags and instruments. This was a very long and difficult process, but the students were patient and did a great job. After getting through TSA, the band headed to the gate and waited for our flight to Denver at 9:50 p.m.

We flew through the night. When we arrived in Denver, we had a short changeover and switched planes to head back to Chicago. The flight from Denver to Chicago was about 2 hours.

When we arrived in Chicago, we gathered out luggage and instruments, loaded the coach buses, and drove back to Marist. We got to Marist around 3:45 p.m. or so, thanked our chaperones, and dismissed the students.

Thank You

First, I would like to thank all the **parents** for their sacrifice and helping pay for their student's tour. This tour would be impossible without our parent's dedication to their students and the band program.

I would like to thank our **band tour chaperones** for all their efforts in making this one of the best trips! The band chaperones were:

Mr. Mark Murphy

Mrs. Julie Murphy

Mr. Jaime Ortiz

Mr. Dan McDermott

Mrs. Julie McDermott

Ms. Erin Laskowski

Mr. Tan Nguyen

Mr. Patrick Keelan (Assistant Band Director)

The chaperones did an EXCELLENT job. They spent many days with our students and their help was invaluable. I truly could not do this trip without them.

I would like to thank **Mr. Rich Alifantis and the Brother Rice Band** for letting us borrow some of their storage cases for our large instruments.

I would like to thank **Mr. Patrick Keelan** for his assistance with planning, accounting, and assisting with the entire tour. He has always done a great job, and I am so lucky to have him at Marist with us!

From Marist, I would like to thank **Mrs. Meg Dunneback, Mr. Larry Tucker, Mr. Marion Klatka, and Mrs. Patti Derdzinski**. I am lucky to work with such great people and I am very fortunate to work with people who are so dedicated to the band program and the students.

Lastly, I want to thank all the **band students** for their hard work, kindness, good behavior, patience, and adaptability throughout the trip. I am so blessed and fortunate to work with such great students and I could not have been happier with how they performed and acted throughout the trip. I love my job as band director at Marist, and that is mostly due to the students.

This was a GREAT trip! This was by far the most difficult trip to plan and coordinate. I had many difficulties with the tour company and costs, but we were able to work them. The students seemed to really have a great time and I was very proud of their performances, behavior, punctuality, attitude, responsibility, and diligence throughout the entire trip. The students really stepped it up for their events, and I could not be happier with how the tour went. I received many comments from people in Hawaii about how well-mannered and well-behaved the students were.

We are one of the only high school bands who are fortunate enough to attend a band tour every year. We can only do this from our support from our students, parents, and the Marist community. I am so happy with the students and I am looking forward to Disney World and Universal Studios next year!

COLLEGE BAND

Calling all Marist Band Alumni
who are currently in college bands!

We want to hear from you!

If you can please send some pictures and/or video of you with your college band, we would like to use them to show to our current students and parents to tell them about the college band experience. We would also like to use them for promotional purposes as well.

Please send all pictures and/or video directly to band director, Mr. Andrew Creagh, at creagh.andrew@marist.net.

Thank you very much!!!

Interview

Mr. Bill Winters

Marist Band Class of 1998



When were you in the band?

I was in the Marist Band from the Fall of 1994 to the Spring of 1998.

What instrument(s) did you play?

Drums were my main instrument - for Marching Band I played cymbals Freshman year, snare drum Sophomore and Junior year, and quads my Senior year.

Favorite Band Story or Memory

There are so many! I loved every pre-game, half-time, and post-game performance. I also loved all of the parades - Columbus Day, Thanksgiving, St. Patrick's Day and more. Playing for the Jay Leno show when he came to do a week of live shows in Chicago was a highlight as well.



Favorite Tour as a Student

Probably our Tour of the East Coast my senior year. We played a concert outside of Lincoln Center and it was a great core memory.

Favorite Piece of Music that you Performed

We performed “Rhapsody in Blue” with one of the students as the piano soloist. That was awesome.

You decided to pursue Music Education. What has that been like, and how did your experiences at Marist help you make that decision?

I come from a family of educators, and I am so glad that I chose music to be the vehicle that I help students learn about the world and themselves. Mr. Manna was always very passionate about music and that enthusiasm was infectious among the whole group.

When I was in college and my first few years of teaching, I went back to Marist and taught the drumline. That really solidified that I made the right choice going into Music Education. Mr. Manna was a mentor not only when I was a student, but also when I was a young educator and that made me really want to spread the passion that I had for music on to the future generations of students.

As a band director, what have been some of your favorite experiences that you have had?

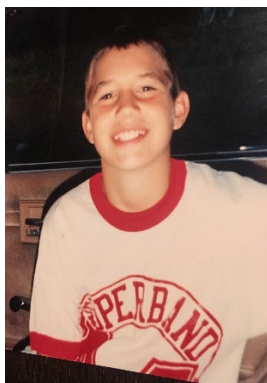
My favorite experiences as a band director have been the trips and camaraderie building experiences that take place each year. Some highlights are our annual trips to perform at Six Flags, team building workshops, bringing in guest clinicians, and seeing/hearing professional performances.

What do you do now?

I currently teach 7th and 8th grade band at Blackhawk Middle School in Bensenville, IL (Fans of the Victory Auto Wrecker's commercial will recognize this "In Bensenville, near O'Hare"). I am also the Fine Arts Coordinator for our school district and the Chairman of the Bensenville Arts Council. I have been very active in our school's teacher's union, serving as president of our local union for seven years, and now I serve on the board of directors for the state for our region which includes 11 local unions in the western suburbs of Chicago.

What is some advice that you would give to the current Marist Band members?

Enjoy the time you have in high school. Making music with people has been an incredibly important part of my identity, and it plays several roles in my life - it is my chosen career, my leisure activity, and my way of connecting with others and the world around me. All of these connections came about because of my experiences that really blossomed when I joined the Marist Band, and also the Imperial Youth Band (IYB) which was a co-ed group open to all public and private students in grades 8-12.



Upcoming Band Performances & Events

9/26-Home Football Game vs. IC College Prep (Grade School Marching Band Night) at 7:30 p.m.

10/10-Homecoming Football Game vs. SICP at 7:30 p.m.

10/29-Band Movie Night at 6:00 p.m. in the Marist Band Room. *For current band students only.

11/19-Meet Marist: Band Edition at 6:00 p.m. This event is for prospective students and families to visit Marist and specifically learn about the band program.

11/27-Chicago Thanksgiving Day Parade at 8:00 a.m.

12/6-Brass Ensemble Performance at A Night of Honor, Glory, and Fame at the Marist Sportsplex

12/11-Christmas Concert at 7:00 p.m. in the Main Gym.

**Playoff Football Games TBD*

**Grade School Recruitment and Pep Band Performance TBD*

Homecoming Band Performance

**We want YOU to perform with the Marist Band
at our Homecoming football game!!!**

What: Marist vs. Providence Homecoming Football Game

When: Friday, October 10th at 7:30 p.m. Call time for alumni band members is 6:45 p.m.

Where: Marist Football Field. Meet in Band Room.

Attire: Comfortable

Music: "Cupid Shuffle"-DJ Khaled. **If you would like to see the sheet music ahead of time, please e-mail Andrew Creagh and he can send it to you.*

RSVP: Please RSVP to Andrew Creagh via e-mail at creagh.andrew@marist.net. Alumni band members can still perform on 10/10 if they were not able to RSVP.

Thank You!

Mr. Larry Tucker '79

Mrs. Irene Halko

Mrs. Meg Dunneback

Ms. Jen Luzzo

Father Tom Hurley '85

Ms. Noelle McDonnell

Mr. Frank Manna

Ms. Allie Bowles

Mr. Marion Klatka

Ms. Kelsey Callahan '12

Mr. Pat Dunne '98

Ms. Patti Derdzinski

Mr. Patrick Keelan '04

Ms. Rita Hoffmann

Mr. Tom Inzinga '84

Mr. Brian Keane '91

Alumni Updates

Have you moved? Do you have a new job? Did you get married? Is there a new addition to your family? Let us know! <https://www.marist.net/alumni/alumni-update/>

Do you know a Marist Band alum who would like to receive these seasonal Marist Band bulletins? If so, please have them e-mail Andrew Creagh at creagh.andrew@marist.net.