

College Visits

I was off on vacation last week and since we didn't have plans to take a family trip, one of the things I really wanted to do was to begin visiting colleges with my daughter Sarah. Now is a good time to start because she is entering her junior year in high school and will be taking the PSATs this fall.



JOHN WOODS

Editor's Report

My wife and I don't exactly have the whole college thing figured out yet, but since Sarah has expressed a desire to go away to college, but not too far away, it's a good time to start exploring the options.

The morning of our visit, I called the admissions office at Mount St. Mary College in Newburgh to see if we could

arrange a tour for later in the day. We were able to book one for that afternoon without any problem, but I'll call the next college we visit a few days in advance, just to be on the safe side.

I thought Mount St. Mary might be a good fit for Sarah, or at least a good place to begin her college search, for a few reasons. It's about two hours from our home, near enough that she or we could visit each other but far enough away so that she would live on campus. It's a Catholic school, with Franciscan Father Kevin Mackin as president and a long association with the Dominican Sisters of Newburgh, now the Dominican Sisters of Hope, who continue to serve there. With a student population of a little less than 3,000 students, it's a growing school, and one that I figure Sarah could handle well.

We arrived about a half hour before our tour was to begin, which gave us time to stroll around the pretty campus overlooking the nearby Hudson River. There were not too many people other than maintenance workers repairing the roof of one of the campus buildings, but that's to be expected on a Friday afternoon in August.

Besides Sarah, there was only one other prospective student on our campus tour, which was led by a pre-med biology student entering her sophomore year. Before we began, I had expected maybe a 20-minute tour hitting the high points of the Newburgh campus. What we got was an insider's view of the entire spread including classroom facilities, the library, chapel and dorms.

Our student guide gave such a good account of the college and of herself that Sarah and I felt we learned a lot about both by the end of our hour tour. She interspersed nuts-and-bolts facts about Mount St. Mary with interesting tidbits from her personal experience. To wit, don't under any circumstances use the popcorn setting on the microwave ovens in the dorm unless you want to risk setting off fire alarms in the building. Hey, a new student should know that.

We both got a charge out of learning that Mount St. Mary's has a 50-year undefeated streak on the

football field, as a shirt in the campus store proclaims. Now, the fact that the college doesn't have a football team may just have something to do with that. But it's nice to see a good sense of humor is part of the mix.

Our guide also answered all our questions, with a knowledge and savvy well beyond her years. In fact, the college couldn't have asked for a better representative.

The morning after the visit, Sarah told me she had a dream about attending Mount St. Mary's. Hey, not too bad for the first time out. We've got some more roads to travel before a decision is made, though, and I think both of us are looking forward to the journey.

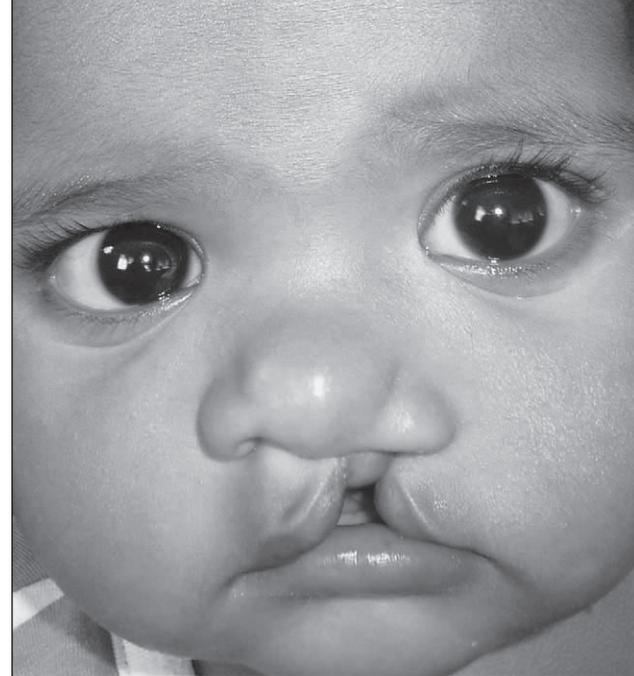
I'd love to hear from some parents and grandparents who are college-shopping now or have in the past. Drop me a line about your experiences at jwoods@cny.org.



Courtesy of St. Dominic's Home

RARE FEAT—Richard Nardella, right, of Pearl River, holds the eighth-hole flag where he just shot a hole-in-one at the Edgewood Country Club in River Vale, N.J., during the Friends of St. Dominic's 19th Annual Golf Tournament Aug. 1. With him is Allen Feltman, St. Dominic's Home director of foster care, who witnessed the hole-in-one that netted Nardella a \$10,000 prize. Area golfers, businesses and supporters of the Friends of St. Dominic raised \$349,018 to help St. Dominic's Home provide services and programs to more than 2,300 people in the Lower Hudson Valley and New York City.

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