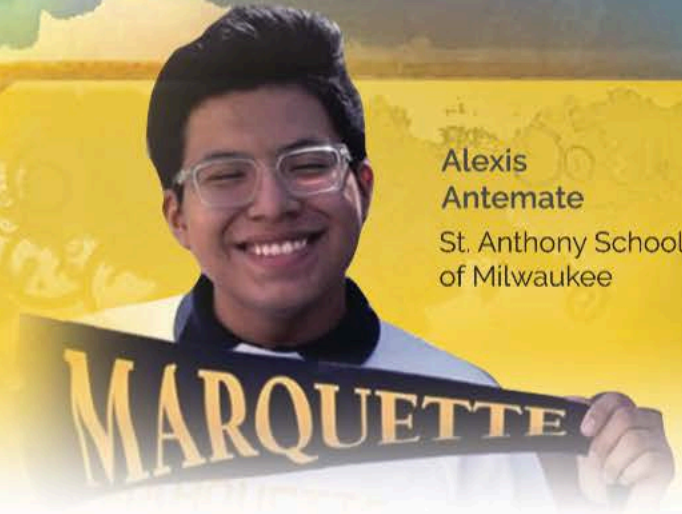


WHERE THERE'S A WILL, THERE'S A WAY



Alexis
Antemate
St. Anthony School
of Milwaukee

For as long as he can remember, Alexis Antemate's mother has risen at 4 am to go to work.

A cook in the kitchen of a local Latino grocery chain, she'd walk there before dawn, return home two hours later to take him to school, then go back to the store until mid-afternoon.

"I've learned what hard work looks like by watching my mother work six to seven days every week. I've always just wanted to make her proud," says Alexis.

In June, Alexis made his mother really proud. He graduated from St. Anthony Catholic School, the first person in his large extended family to earn a high school diploma.

Close-knit school

For Alexis though, it wasn't enough simply to graduate. Alexis took eight Advanced Placement classes – college-level curriculum – during high school. He was a member of the National Honor Society and had earned a 3.95 grade point average upon graduation.

"He's always been motivated by wanting to make his mom proud," says Jennifer Lopez, Vice President of Academic Affairs at St. Anthony. "And he's done it."

"Without the voucher program, Alexis never would have attended St. Anthony."

"She always said to me, 'My work is in the kitchen. Your work is at school,'" says Alexis.

"I want to do my best because of her."

Alexis says he's always been encouraged to do well and find his niche at St. Anthony. It's big, yet administration and faculty place great emphasis on meeting the individual needs of each student there.

The largest Catholic school in the country, St. Anthony is comprised of five campuses serving 1,800 students in grades K4 through 12. It's 99 percent Latino and 99 percent of students qualify for one of Wisconsin's parental choice programs.

"It's been a great place for me to learn – and to discover who I am," says Alexis.

(continued on back)

Full ride to college

No matter how hard he worked, Alexis knew his mother could never afford to send him to college.

"A whole year's paycheck wouldn't be half as much as we'd need," he says.

"But Mom always says, 'Where there's a will, there's a way,'"

Mom was right.

Alexis recently learned he was awarded a four-year scholarship to Marquette through the Burke Scholars program.

"We hope to build really good people with a really good education who'll make a mark in the world."

"Mind blown," says Alexis of his reaction. "My mom was so happy, and then she went and prayed a whole prayer session at her altar."

The Burke Scholarship is awarded not only for excellence in academics but for a student's commitment to their community. Alexis exceeded 200 service hours his senior year in St. Anthony's after-school program and as a camp counselor at the Linden Sculpture Garden in Brown Deer.

He plans to study economics.

"I love figuring out numbers," he says. "I'd like to use my knowledge to start a homeless shelter and teach people ways out of homelessness."

Building good people

When Alexis thinks back on his childhood, he remembers seeing his mom tire in the early evening and fall asleep. He was disappointed she wasn't more present.

"As I grew though, I thought, 'I have everything because of her.' Her focus was my education so I could have a good life."

"We try to break the cycle of poverty, give back and always remember those less fortunate," says St. Anthony's Lopez.

"We hope to build really good people with a really good education who'll make a mark in the world."

Strengthening Wisconsin's communities



Students from the Milwaukee voucher program pose with Jim Bender of School Choice Wisconsin and Carl, Marcus and Shenita Landry at the Landry's Basketball Camp at Milwaukee's Vincent High School. School Choice Wisconsin is a camp sponsor.

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