

Spotlight on NDNU Alumnus David Greenbaum

NDNU attracts remarkable students to its program, and David Greenbaum is no exception. A native Californian, David Greenbaum, aka “Mr. G.,” was born and raised in San Francisco by Filipino/Irish Catholic and Austrian/American Jewish parents. “I’m multi-ethnic and multi-cultural,” says David, who attended Catholic schools from kindergarten through college and graduate school including St. Emydius, Archbishop Riordan High School, Chaminade University of Honolulu and Notre Dame de Namur University, the latter where he has the distinction of earning both teaching and administrative credentials, along with two master of arts degrees – one in teaching (specializing in theatre arts) and the other in school administration.

David’s work background and experience combine academics and the performing arts. As a member of the San Francisco Boys Chorus in the 1980s, he performed locally and globally, including a role in San Francisco Opera’s production of *Werther*. Locally, he has also worked with San Francisco’s iconic Beach Blanket Babylon, Lamplighters Music Theatre, Pocket Opera, Pacifica Spindrift Players and Broadway by the Bay.

Before settling into his current job as principal at St. Thomas More School in San Francisco, David was a full-time educator, teaching thousands of students in grades K-12, spanning 20+ years in education. He is a certified EQ Practitioner through Six Seconds Emotional Intelligence Network, was San Francisco Unified School District’s first Visual and Performing Arts Master Teacher/Teacher Fellow (Dreamcatcher Honoree 2018), and formerly served as Director of Broadway by the Bay’s Youth Theatre Conservatory.

Recently, he was a 2020 Music Educator Innovation Award recipient, a 2020-21 American Federation Teachers Teacher Leader, a 2021-22 KQED Media Literacy Innovator, Music Will (formerly Little Kids Rock) Regional Program Specialist, and Modern Band Summit presenter.

Even though life can get busy, David enjoys spending time with his spouse and two children, singing, biking, getting out in nature, and eating ice cream. He also loves to play and/or coach baseball and basketball, and watch the Warriors, Niners, Giants and A’s play any chance he gets.

Why NDNU? What appealed to you?

It’s a great school, a gem on the peninsula, and a beautiful place to learn and grow. It was also close to home so I could teach full-time and go to school in the evenings. It took me about a year and a half to get my credential and then I decided to add a master’s degree into the mix. About 10 years later, I returned to work on my administrative credential and master’s in administration.

I had incredible professors and mentors at NDNU – Anabel Jensen, Susan Charles, and Samuel Johnson immediately come to mind. They helped shape my path as an educator. Caryl Hodges is wonderful; she was so honest, real and engaging and really inspired me to do some of my best work.

Overall, it’s the people who make NDNU such an amazing place.

Which of the Hallmarks stand out for you?

They all resonate in some fashion, but there are a few that really speak to me. I’d like to take some poetic license here and combine two Hallmarks:

“We educate for and act on behalf of justice and peace in the world” and “We embrace the gift of diversity.”

These are both huge for me personally and represent my lived experience. Every person has a voice and a story to share, and our job as educators is to help create a safe space so they can tell their stories and celebrate what makes them unique. Performing arts – especially song and dance – is a great way for students to share a bit of themselves and come together.

Another Hallmark that rings true for me is *“We commit ourselves to community service.”*

It’s how I live my life, by helping out this world little by little. I really appreciate the Sisters of Notre Dame for establishing the Hallmarks and the work that they do. They truly live out their faith and in doing so, are exemplary role models. I am forever grateful and honored to be a part of NDNU.