



On Saturday, December 12th, St. Ambrose Academy is bringing the party to you. We're taking our Benefit Dinner virtual and we invite you to host a Watch Party and join the fun!

What is a Watch Party, you ask? Instead of coming to a downtown Madison venue, you'll gather at your home (or someone else's!) to enjoy an interactive experience that will bring in a taste of the joyful, social atmosphere that is a hallmark of each SAA Benefit Dinner.

Perhaps there are people you love to see each year or maybe you want to invite friends who are new to St. Ambrose - either way, Watch Parties can be set up however you are most comfortable. You're also encouraged to dress in a theme: Movie or book? Quarantine Uniform? Christmas Sweaters? Or just come as you are! And yes, there are prizes at stake.

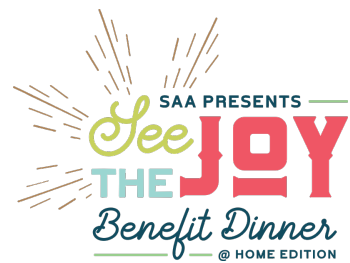
Every two guests who register will receive a Party Box filled with fare from acclaimed Heritage Tavern and Chef Dan Fox, choice of Wollersheim wines, custom wine glasses to sip in style, games, and many fun surprises from local partners and sponsors.

On the 12th, dig into the contents of your Party Box, send us your selfies (which we'll show on air and announce prize winners!), and enjoy other interactive elements during the pre-show livestream starting at 6pm.

Starting at 8pm, we'll bring you a 45 minute live show with updates about the important work SAA is doing to build strong, faith-filled young people who are the leaders our society and Church need.

This year, we've teamed up with longtime business sponsor Backflip, a local creative marketing studio, to produce this innovative event. Ryan Freng (Backflip founder and creative director) and James Carrano (SAA parent) are already hard at work preparing to be your emcees! Freng, who volunteered as a bartender for the very first SAA Benefit Dinner, is excited to be a part of this year's digital format.

"I've always been impressed with the education, formation



Our emcees made a fun video to explain more about what we've got in store for you: watch now at ambroseacademy.org/joy.

Questions? We'd love to help: info@ambroseacademy.org.



On September 29, we began our exciting new speaker series, which gives benefactors, families and friends of SAA a window into the classroom.

To kick things off, Mr. Michael Kwas discussed the question 'How Can We Discern Historical Truth' and laid out some of the ways the SAA curriculum builds students' abilities through the grammar, logic and rhetoric stages. Participants asked some great questions at the end, which led to more fruitful discussion about the topic and the inner workings of SAA.

Up next: Mrs. Emily Swanson, science and religion teacher at SAA, will be our featured faculty speaker on **Tuesday November 10th!**

As Pope John Paul II often reminded us, there is a unity of faith and reason in the Catholicism and Mrs. Swanson will share some insights on the *Contemplation of God in Nature*.

We invite you to save the date and head to our Facebook page (having an account is not required): [facebook.com/St.Ambrose.Academy](https://www.facebook.com/St.Ambrose.Academy) where the event will be livestreamed.

and environment at St. Ambrose. When we made our first promo video for the school I came away desiring that I had gone to St. Ambrose and wanting the same for my children," he said.

Calling the dynamic See the Joy Benefit Dinner "a first of it's kind," Freng thinks that this new format "will be a unique and awesome event that attendees will always remember. I think people are going to love it!"

In this unusual year, we look forward to giving you and our other St. Ambrose friends a memorable 'night in'. RSVP by December 3 and get ready to 'See the Joy' as we celebrate Advent and the impact of SAA, our students, and alumni in our communities.

BONUS: Watch Parties of 8 will get a special Expansion Pack with games, custom coasters and napkins to add some extra (and practical) flair to your party, plus a surprise created for you by talented SAA students.

RSVP for a Watch Party of 8 by November 11, and receive complimentary delivery of your Party Boxes to an address within 30 miles of SAA and a \$25 grocery gift card to buy extra snacks or beverages for your party. There's even an option for our long-distance friends!

Check out our emcees' fun invitation video, tips on how to host a watch party, and find more details about what's in store at:





In late August, senior Sophia Speece was on a family vacation out west with her parents and five sisters (including three other SAA students). Sophia was looking forward to all the perks of being a senior.

Meanwhile, Dean of Faculty Dr. Sean Monahan was more than a month into twice-weekly meetings with Dane County officials preparing extensive safety protocols for SAA to reopen September 8.

From his professional experience with coronaviruses from years in the pharmaceutical industry, Dr. Monahan knew the necessary steps to effectively carry out all public health recommendations. SAA was ready to operate in-person.

Then, on Friday, August 21 at 5:15 p.m., Dane County issued Emergency Order #9, closing all county schools. The news overshadowed the remainder of Sophia's vacation. She resigned herself to the idea of long hours in front of a computer screen, competing with her sisters and parents – who have been working remotely – for a quiet place in a busy home. "I was sad and anxious," Sophia remembered.

It was time for SAA to act. After hearing from many families in the immediate wake of the news from Dane County, "We had to fight for the rights of our families and their children," recalled SAA Executive Director Joan Carey.

In a matter of hours, board members, staff and parent volunteers mobilized to act. SAA was

determined to support parents' decisions to provide their children with the most stable and secure option for their children considering their individual circumstances. Whether in-person or distance learning, the Academy was prepared to give students what they needed to flourish. If daycares could operate according to county guidelines, why couldn't schools like SAA?

The Academy's leadership turned to attorneys Misha Tseytlin and Kevin LeRoy, who advised an appeal directly to the Wisconsin Supreme Court to challenge the order and expedite reopening school.

Joan explained, "The attorneys guided us every step of the way: collaborating with other Catholic schools and plaintiff parents to demonstrate the harmful consequences of the Dane County order; finalizing robust reopening plans that would withstand the scrutiny of the court; and writing our affidavits."

Within 48 hours of announcing SAA's legal challenge, the school raised a remarkable \$110,000 through a crowdfunding site. Gifts came in from across the country and even internationally as people rallied around the cause. In God's providence, this amount will exactly cover the legal expenses it took to get to this point, as the attorneys intend to cover any further fees due to the importance of this civil rights issue.

"[More than 850] donors wanted to be a part of the effort to restore to parents the right to decide what's best for their children, rather than letting an entire generation of kids be put in front of computer screens all day long, five days a week," added Joan.



On Thursday, September 10, the Supreme Court granted an injunction, allowing SAA to open for classes in-person on Monday, September 14. Oral arguments for the case will begin on December 8. For more information on the lawsuit, visit: ambroseacademy.org/openschool.

Dr. Monahan is overjoyed to be back in the classroom, and he's not the only one. "The faculty are thrilled to be back with the students because we know this is a better mode of education. It's who we are," he said.

Sophia added that a favorite part of being back is that students can "resume Socratic dialogue and build off each other's arguments in a class discussion." Senior year is looking up for her and her peers.

Thanks to the protocols developed by Dr. Monahan's team and the grassroots support, the students of SAA are back in the classroom! One could feel a palpable joy that first day back as teachers and students reveled in simply being in the same space, even at a distance, as their colleagues and peers.

As the Academy continues to follow the county's guidelines in order to provide the priceless gift of a Catholic education, we give thanks to God for all those who rallied together. Because of this collaboration, parents – not just at SAA, but across the county – now can choose the best options for their children's total well-being and education.