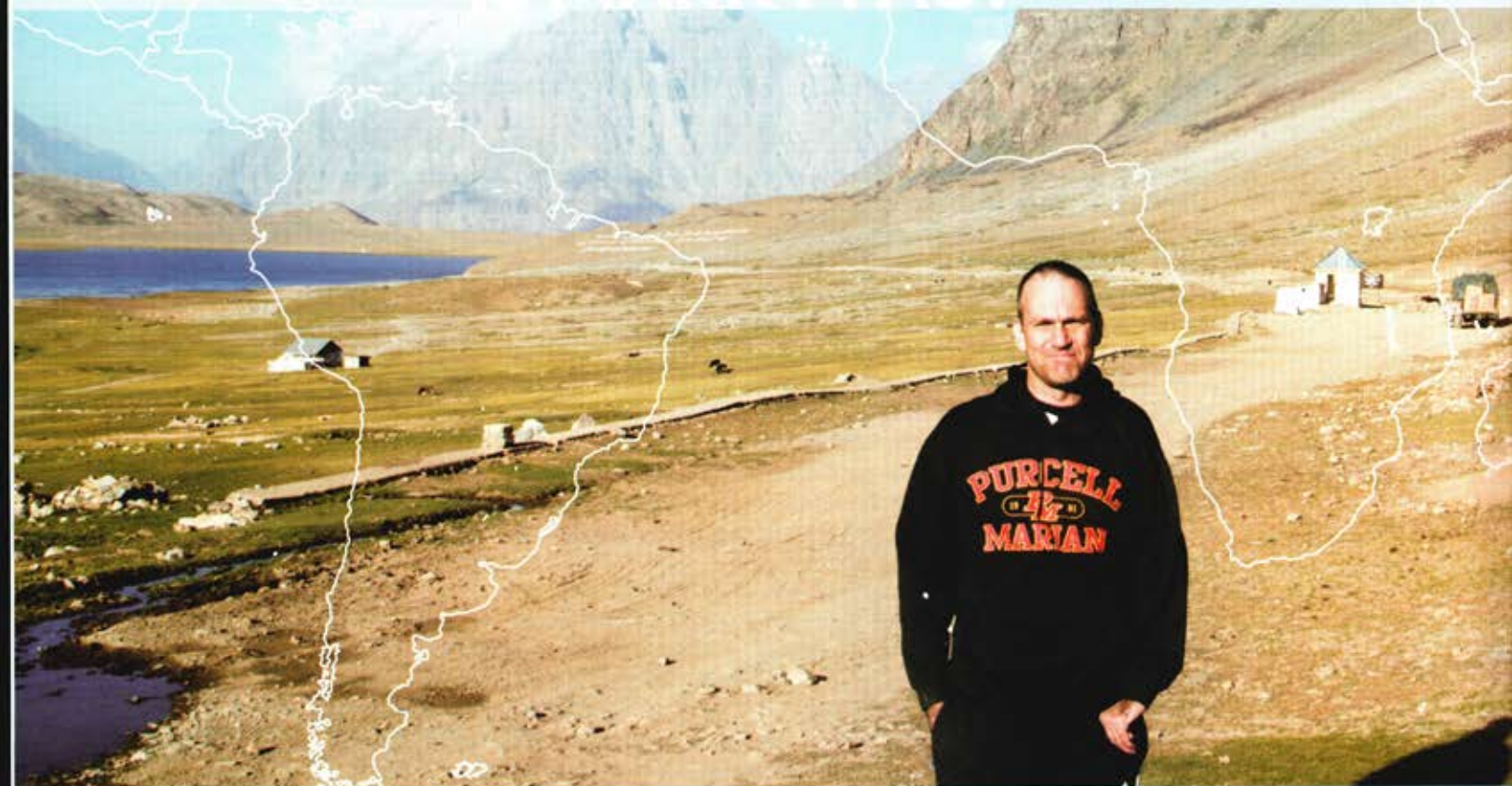


# WHERE IN THE WORLD IS MARK PFAU?



By Tom Stickley

**W**ell, the short answer to that question is Northern Kentucky. Mark lives in the School Flats which is the original Dayton, Kentucky High School Building. Mark Pfau, Purcell Marian class of 1989, reconnected with me and Purcell Marian last year. His story is extraordinary to say the least. Mark is the son of Dan and Susan Pfau and he has one sibling, a sister Ann. Ann lives in Albany, New York and is an author. Mark's dad Dan attended West High and eventually ran a company that made industrial size fans and other machinery. His mom Susan attended Woodard High School. He had a Grandpa who attended East Side High School which came to be known as Withrow. His Grandpa swam in the 1928 Olympics. So, you can see that Mark comes from a family of hard workers and achievers.

Mark came to us in 1985 with many of those same traits. After attending three different primary schools, Lotspeich, Springer, and Indian Hill Middle School, he arrived here on Hackberry Street. After high school Mark got into music for a while and had many different minimum wage jobs that were not fulfilling at all. Eventually, at about the age of 40, he decided to travel and try and get his life in order and get himself headed down a rewarding path. What that path might



be he did not know, but he was "off to see the Wizard!" In Nepal, he climbed one of the highest mountains in the world. He was once stuck on the border of Togo and Ghana in West Africa and had to wait nine days to get some help from home so he could get back to the States. He liked to travel on his own so he could go at his own pace and enjoy all the places he was visiting. Mark has some physical limitations and it "rankles him" that people might think he was a burden in any way. In 2011-12 Mark visited all seven continents and Antarctica while visiting 39 countries. Eventually he found himself volunteering one day a week at a school in Kenya. Mark began to experience some very rewarding and fulfilling activities. His tutoring showed him that there are many in this world who are working at a distinct disadvantage. He had also met a woman on one of his trips and as Mark put it, "she made me realize just what I was capable of." Mark began to get a real sense of what his life's work might be.

**T**he disadvantage for many schools was and still is modern technology. Many schools were using hand me down computers donated from companies that had modernized their own equipment. As some schools continued to rely on this type of outdated equipment their students were falling farther and farther behind kids who were attending schools with all the latest technology. Mark said he could tell the kids who came from strong families because the work ethic was there, all they needed was the tools to go along with that work ethic.

In 2014 Mark set up a 501(c)3 through the Starfire council of Greater Cincinnati. The mission of his non-profit would be to help schools who needed a boost in the technology area. One of Marks first projects was and is his Alma Madder, Purcell Marian High School. Purcell Marian has been the beneficiary of a lot of technology in recent years through the generosity of John Burns and John's former employer, CBTS, Cincinnati Bell Technology Solutions. As fate, would have it, John moved on with his career and is in the process of establishing a new company. Mark showed up just as that transformation was happening and picked up the tech baton! He has continued the technology initiative right where John had left off and has provided our kids with the tools they need to succeed.

Mark is working with four schools now and hopes to be in 6 by the end of next year. When our interview was over I asked if I could drop him somewhere and he took me up on my offer. I wound up taking Mark to the Best Buy in Price Hill and then down to St. Lawrence to drop off a 55 inch television for their computer lab. The teacher at St. Lawrence could not have been more excited and appreciative. From there we headed back to Northern Kentucky to drop Mark off at his apartment in the old Dayton, Kentucky High School Building. The next day he was headed up to Cleveland for a Blue Oyster Cult concert and then the following day headed to Columbus for the Ohio State / Northwestern game!

If you would like to send Mark a note or feel inclined to help him in any way his email is [schoolnewtechnologyinitiative@gmail.com](mailto:schoolnewtechnologyinitiative@gmail.com).

### From the Faculty & Staff:

During the past two academic years, 2015-16, 2016-17, Purcell Marian High School has been blessed with a large quantity of Technology donated by School New Technology Initiative. These donations have brought numerous improvements to the IT environment at Purcell Marian. Students now have current generation Intel processor driven PCs with Windows 8 and 10 in the Library. The prior technology was running Windows XP. Faculty and Staff members have received new generation PCs as well. There are now large screen televisions and monitors throughout the building that replaced aging projectors. These along with wireless technology additions and software upgrades provided by School New Technology Initiative have helped Purcell Marian shorten our timeline to a fully up to date technology infrastructure.

We can never say "Thank You" enough for these gifts!

**Chris Clark**

IT Coordinator, Purcell Marian High School