

Katie Lallas Owens '01 and Chris Owens '99 have a simple strategy for referring students to the College of Saint Benedict and Saint John's University: "Put yourself out there."

"The biggest thing is, you know kids you can refer: babysitters, cousins, nieces, nephews, friends who have kids, coworkers who have kids, people in your neighborhood or at church," Katie said. "Just get out there and talk to people."

The strategy works. The number of students the couple has referred, who've applied and been accepted, has topped 50.

So what do the Owenses look for in a referral? Great kids, strong academics and involvement in a "ton of different activities" top the list.

They keep T-shirts in their office, host gatherings at their house to talk about the schools, and direct students to the Web site.

Katie admits that some students view the schools as the "all-boy or all-girl school up in the woods." Once they come to campus, all that changes. "I've never had a kid not like Saint Ben's or Saint John's," Katie said. Their referrals agree.

"After attending an all-girl high school, I was skeptical of Saint Ben's," said Angie Ballman '09. "Katie helped me get past my initial judgments. Saint Ben's is everything I had hoped for and more."

"Normally, the process of choosing a school for is one of the hardest decisions individuals make throughout their lives," said Emily Plunkett '10. "Having the ability to hear what someone other than my parents had to say about the school played a major factor in my final decision."

"Katie described the camaraderie, community, and friendships that go unmatched here at the college," said Jessa Cizek '08. "I am grateful to be a Bennie, a decision that may never have been a reality if it weren't for Katie. She's a gem!"

"We had such a wonderful experience that really shaped the rest of our lives," Katie said. "Of course we got an excellent education. Beyond that, we took away amazing friendships, the Benedictine values and the sense of community. It's part of you for the rest of your life. We want others to have that."