

Building a Strong
Foundation Through
Catholic Education
in the Roman Catholic
Diocese of Syracuse

WINTER 2023

Pillars



FOUNDATIONS
ANNUAL REPORT
INSIDE

**MISSION STATEMENT**

The Catholic Schools in the Diocese of Syracuse share in the evangelizing mission of Jesus Christ to love and be of service to God and one another. Together with our families, communities, and parishes, our schools provide an education rooted in the Gospels that is “living, conscious, and active.” Students witness and are taught values and ideals that are in accordance with the teachings of the Roman Catholic Church. We empower our students to live their faith with compassion, integrity, and respect for all life and the diversity of our world. Our schools are faith-centered communities focused on promoting academic excellence while developing a strong moral conscience and embracing Catholic social teachings that enable our students to meet the lifelong challenges and demands of our rapidly changing world.

Dear Friends,

As we highlight our Catholic schools, it's important to remember that Jesus was and is the model teacher. People gathered around him. They listened to his teachings — and great things happened. Take, for example, the story of Jesus and the fishermen. Led by the apostle Peter, the fishermen had been at sea for a long time. It was hard work, and they had nothing to show for it. Not a single fish. They were tired and wanted to give up. But Jesus, working through Peter, told them to try again. At first, Peter was unsure. After all, he was the fisherman, so didn't he know best? But ultimately, his faith in Jesus convinced him to lead the men back out to sea. Many complained and questioned, but soon their boats were overflowing with fish. Peter and his men took a leap of faith and believed. They gave themselves over to the word of God and were rewarded for it. Overflowing with fish to the point of nearly sinking, they brought their boats back to shore — and continued to follow the Lord.

Our Catholic schools have much in common with the story of Jesus and the fishermen. First, we, as a community, take our own leap of faith every day as we follow the word of God. Our clergy and religious, our teachers and our staff, parents and grandparents, and even our parishioners and all those who pray for us daily, work tirelessly to share the lessons of Jesus with our students throughout the Diocese. Yes, we may have our doubts, as the world can certainly be a difficult place. I am sure many of us have wondered if we have what it takes to instill in our young people what they need and require for life skills. Nevertheless, we turn to Jesus, as Peter did. And, like the reluctant but faithful fishermen, our children succeed. They thrive in their faith, in the classrooms, on the fields and in our community, as living examples of the love of the Lord and the goodness that lives in the halls of our Catholic schools.

I invite you to continue to listen to our Creator God and see that there are miracles happening all around us. It might be a little fish — the confident smile of a child who finally figures out that difficult math problem or the hope in the eyes of a student who is lonely only to find friendship inside the classroom. Or, sometimes it's a big fish — the hard won acceptance to the college of one's choice or the possibility of a student being called to a religious vocation. Maybe, it's simply the feeling of knowing that God has His hand on our shoulder, guiding us each and every day.

I hope you will find many examples of the gifts of our Catholic Schools throughout *Pillars* magazine. Each article, photo or statistic is a testament to the work we all do together to educate our children in the way of the Lord. God Bless You!

In the Name of Jesus,

+Douglas J. Lucia

Most Rev. Douglas J. Lucia
Bishop of Syracuse





A LETTER FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT

Dear Catholic School Family:

We continue to follow our mission in our Catholic Schools in the Diocese of Syracuse of evangelization by bringing young people and families closer together in a relationship with Jesus Christ. Our schools are faith-centered communities focused on promoting academic excellence while developing a strong moral conscience and embracing Catholic social teaching that enable our students to thrive in life and to be fully prepared for heaven.

We proudly offer our 2022 *Pillars*, an annual report of our system of schools in the Diocese of Syracuse. We are twenty-one schools, seventeen PreK-6 elementary schools and four diocesan junior-senior high schools, consisting of parish and regional schools that follow the Gospel teachings that are living, conscious and active in what they do. We strive to engage our youth in the love of Christ in their academic and individual lives. This year's *Pillars* includes the specific measurements of our schools as a system showing quantitative data to witness our fiscal, academic, service and demographic positions. Showing these measures is helpful to see the structures and strengths of this system — all very important.

We also have additional content customary in this and each edition that includes more of the spirit of our schools. The stories are unique to the school community in which they represent and serve. We say amongst diocesan leaders in the nation of Catholic schools that “If you’ve seen one Catholic school... then you’ve seen one Catholic school.” Even in our own relatively small community of schools, each of our schools possess unique attributes and characteristics we relish and enjoy while recognizing that, with those unique characteristics, the beauty of each is similar to siblings in a family — each sharing a name and unique features while possessing personality traits that make them uniquely attractive to identify them as individuals — each one, a one of a kind!

We’re excited to let you look inside of our schools through these stories uniquely explaining the pillars of our Catholic schools — Faith, Excellence and Service.

So take a look into these pages and experience the people — students, teachers, support professionals, principals, parents and family members — all united into our family of schools that we call the Catholic Schools in the Diocese of Syracuse.

Peace and Joy,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'W. Crist', with a long, sweeping underline.

William W. Crist
Superintendent of Catholic Schools

St. Mary's Students Relies on Faith to Raise Money for Christmas Ark

BY CAROLINE K. REFF

Most children want a puppy, a kitten or even a goldfish for Christmas. It's not often that a child asks for two water buffalo, two cows, two sheep and two goats — but Eli Niver did. What the current third grader from St. Mary's School in Cortland wanted for Christmas was, in fact, an "ark" full of animals that would help people in underserved countries make a better life for themselves.



Third grader Eli Niver has always had a true love for animals.

Eli's great grandmother and grandparents had long supported the nonprofit organization Heifer International with monetary gifts towards purchasing a share of a cow or a flock of chickens for poor communities half way around the globe. Eli's grandfather had traveled around the world while serving in the military, seeing first-hand how poverty could be eased through the "riches" of owning an animal or two. One day while Eli was looking through the Heifer International catalog at his grandmother's house, he made the firm decision that his Christmas wish would be an "ark" to help others. A wish with a price tag of \$5,000.

According to Heifer International, giving a gift of an animal is like providing a small business to people who live in poverty and hunger in third world nations. These animals supply things like milk, wool, eggs and more by providing not only food but goods that can be traded or sold. Livestock can also help people work the land and sustain farming. Often, the next generation of animals is passed on to others in the family or village. Heifer International's "ark," which is a symbolic nod to the Biblical story of Noah, also contains bees, chicks, rabbits, seeds and more.

At first, Eli's mom, Katherine Niver, figured her son would quickly move on from the idea and add something different to his Christmas list, but the determined young man didn't budge.

"OK, we've got some heavy praying to do," Katherine said to herself. "As a single parent, raising \$5,000 is a hefty goal, and I didn't want him to be disappointed if we weren't able to raise enough money. But, boy, did he prove me wrong!"

With Eli's help, Katherine started sewing Christmas ornaments that resembled a star or poinsettia. Eli jumped right in, carefully gluing the ribbons and decorative beads on each one. "This was his project from the get-go," Katherine explained. "He helped every step of the way."

continued on page 4

continued from page 3

Friends and family purchased ornaments, but the Nivers knew they were going to need more support to make this project a reality. So, one Sunday around Thanksgiving, Eli stood in front of the congregation during Mass at St. Mary's Church and told the parishioners how an ark full of animals could do so much good for those who needed it most, as well as about his love of animals and his hope to one day become a veterinarian. Eli also explained how many of the lessons his then second grade teacher, Mrs. Smith at St. Mary's School, had taught him about the saints and the importance of taking care of others had helped his decision.

"At first, it was scary to get up on the altar and talk, but these are people I know, so why should I be scared?" he explained. Churchgoers were touched by his sincerity, faith and genuine belief that he could make his wish come true with their help. Ornament sales went through the roof, and some people made monetary donations.

"Eli is very devoted to his faith, and a huge piece of that is rooted in his school. He lives his faith daily without fear or shame, and he emulates what he learns. I attribute a big part of that to the beautiful education he receives at St. Mary's."

—KATHERINE NIVER

"There was a nice lady who came up and gave me \$100 and said, 'We need more veterinarians like you,'" Eli said.

"Eli is very devoted to his faith," said Katherine, "and a huge piece of that is rooted in his school. He lives his faith daily without fear or shame, and he emulates what he learns. I attribute a big part of that to the beautiful education he receives at St. Mary's."



Eli and his mom, Katherine, spent countless hours creating Christmas ornaments to help raise funds for the ark.

While the outpouring of support helped him get closer to his goal — \$1,000 was collected that first Sunday — he still needed to raise more in order to get the ark. Katherine's employer, McNeil & Company, an insurance provider, has an employee match policy for donations. When she explained about Eli's ark, the company quickly agreed to match whatever the young boy raised. Between the home-made Christmas ornaments, donations and the employer match, Heifer International received over \$5,000 to purchase an ark. The nonprofit reached out to Katherine after hearing Eli's story, and she was able to get a certificate overnighted to her, so she could wrap it up and put it under the tree as a surprise for Christmas morning. Not knowing if they'd quite reach their goal, Katherine had not yet told Eli that he had raised enough money for his wish.

"My brother had just been deployed, and we were about to spend our first Christmas without the whole family together, so having this beautiful project to focus on helped all of us remember what the season was truly about," Katherine explained of the anticipation of seeing Eli receive his gift.

While there were no goats or water buffalo grazing under the Christmas tree that morning, there was a joyous young boy opening a certificate to show that his faith and hard work had made his wish come true. Somewhere around the world, animals were soon delivered to make a real difference for a family — and possibly an entire community. "This is the best Christmas present ever," the young boy said upon seeing what his wish had accomplished.

The ark is not a one-and-done gift, however. When people receive these animals, they agree that the first round of offspring goes to someone else in their village. So, it's a gift that keeps on giving, according to Heifer International.

Eli received his gift over a year ago. He and his mom agreed to take Christmas 2022 off from fundraising but intend to collect the money needed for another ark in 2023.



In an effort to seek donations for his fundraiser, Eli spoke to parishioners at St. Mary's Catholic Church in Cortland.

St. Mary's Principal Denise Hall is so proud of Eli and his efforts to help others. She and the school community plan to support him in his mission to donate another ark. "Service is a big part of what we teach and try to model at St. Mary's, and Eli truly understands that message," Hall said. "He is such a good neighbor, and he is an inspiration to others within our school and parish community."

If you would like to help Eli raise funds for his 2023 Christmas ark, contact St. Mary's Principal Denise Hall at dhall@syrdiocese.org.

Caroline K. Reff is a freelance writer, writing instructor at Syracuse University and the editor of Pillars magazine.

Good News Foundation Grant Helps Students Fill Backpacks for the Needy With Useful Goods and Loving Words

BY DIANE M. STIRLING

As a service-learning project, fifth and sixth graders at three Diocesan schools in the city of Syracuse lived out the values of their faith by extending empathy and evangelism to neighbors in need when they assembled backpacks filled with personal hygiene and self-care goods to donate to residents of the Syracuse Catholic Charities Men's Shelter.

Over 200 students put together nearly 600 personal care kits with resources from a \$5,000 grant provided by the Good News Foundation. Called "Lighting Another's Path in Service and Prayer," the project was a way to generate awareness and connection to neighbors in need, illustrate some of the life lessons of Jesus and provide a way for students to evangelize the tenets of their faith.

After receiving the grant in the fall, students at Cathedral Academy at Pompei, Most Holy Rosary School and Blessed Sacrament School selected goods of practical use to donate to needy and homeless residents of a place that never turns anyone away.

In addition to filling the 16-inch drawstring backpacks with shampoo, deodorant, toothpaste, toothbrushes, rain ponchos, socks, washcloths and energy bars, the youngsters also tucked in loving messages. Their notes expressed sentiments of love, hope, inspiration and encouragement culled from uplifting Bible verses. Students selected the verses with the help of teachers and project leaders. In many cases, students hand-wrote them on paper hearts.

Project leaders discussed issues of need in the community while helping students pick out items to include, assemble the packs, and insert the Bible

Fifth and sixth grade students from Cathedral Academy at Pompei, Most Holy Rosary School and Blessed Sacrament School assembled backpacks filled with personal hygiene items and self-care goods for the Syracuse Catholic Charities Men's Shelter through a \$5,000 grant from the Good News Foundation. Right, CAP Principal Tina Seymour supervises students as they assemble some of the donations.





The care packages also included notes and Bible verses for the recipients.

verses. They talked about the importance of showing empathy toward others and spreading God's word in the spirit of the church's mission, says Joan Spector, who led the project.

Spector, former director of Cabrini Team Health when this project began (now executive director of Christ the King Retreat House), and William Crist, superintendent of Catholic Schools in the Syracuse Roman Catholic Diocese, personally delivered the filled backpacks to the Catholic Charities Men's Shelter. That allowed them to also evangelize their faith as they witnessed the expressions of appreciation and thankfulness the students' contributions generated.

"You would not believe how grateful, gracious, and thankful the shelter was to receive these care packages," Spector said. "It was a wonderful thing to see how this project provided joy to others. Through this grant funding, if we turned one person's heart toward Jesus, it would be well worth it."

Crist says that students at all three schools were very excited that the grant allowed them to provide community service. "It comes down to this: As we look at the Gospel message of love God and love others as you love yourself, the students have a closer connection to their fellow man and to people who may be marginalized in some way. These young students could see the gift of service in action and experience providing assistance to others and being conscious of that as part of their school day."

In many cases, Crist and Spector personally handed the backpacks to shelter recipients. "To a person, the gentlemen receiving these backpacks were so grateful to receive the items, so appreciative of the work our students did in assembling them, and the personal touch and personal messages students sent with them. It touched the hearts of everyone involved," Crist added.

According to Spector, participating schools were chosen in part because many of their students are familiar with poverty. Statistically, she said, more than 40% of the students in these schools qualify for

free or reduced lunches. Many of those students also receive some form of scholarship.

Nevertheless, parents who send their children to diocesan schools "are vested in seeing their children have an education that's rooted in the Gospel and that makes sure their kids are living the Gospel, getting a good education, and that their values and ideals are upheld," Spector added. "Some of these students may themselves have experienced food insecurity or the need of a place to live; so a service project giving back to others is a wonderful way for them to express their faith."

Tina Seymour, principal of Cathedral Academy at Pompei, said the project provided an important opportunity for students to experience faith-guided community outreach. "So many of our children come from families in tremendous need. This amazing project gave them an opportunity to recognize that there are others who are in even greater need. The project allowed the students to reach out and minister to the needs of the greater community and encouraged them to continue to make this part of their faith. We packed all the bags with messages from the heart and soul, and this was special as well."

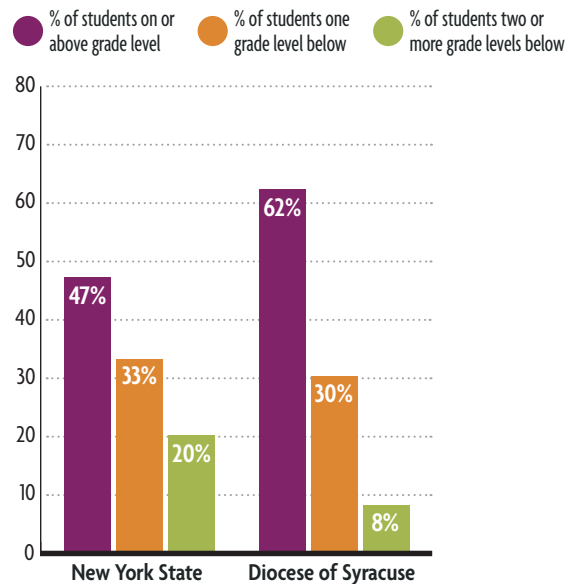
"This was a wonderful celebration of evangelization and what we teach in our Catholic schools," Spector concluded. "The students were just a wonderful part of brightening someone's day, potentially leading them toward Christ and evangelizing their faith, thus living their faith in action. Just as Jesus reached out to people on the sidelines of life, our students were reaching out to those in need by assembling these care packages."

Diane Stirling is a freelance writer in Oneida, New York.

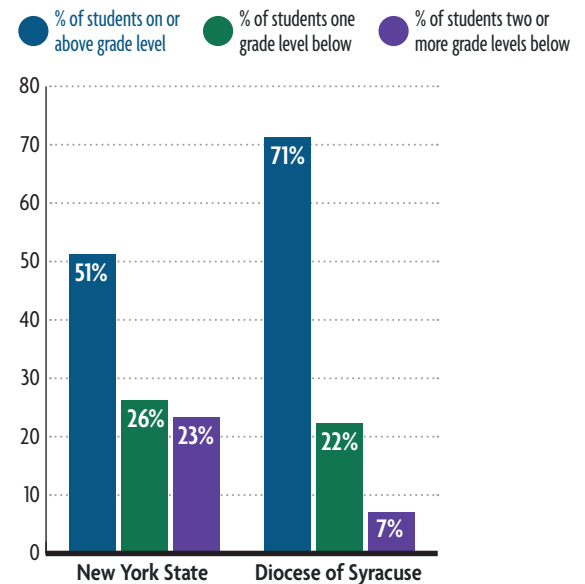
Assessments Show Continued Growth and Excellence

How do Diocesan students compare to other students in New York State based upon i-Ready assessments? Reading and math scores from students in Kindergarten through eighth grade reflect 620,000+ NYS students and 2,200+ Catholic school students.

Math: Spring 2022

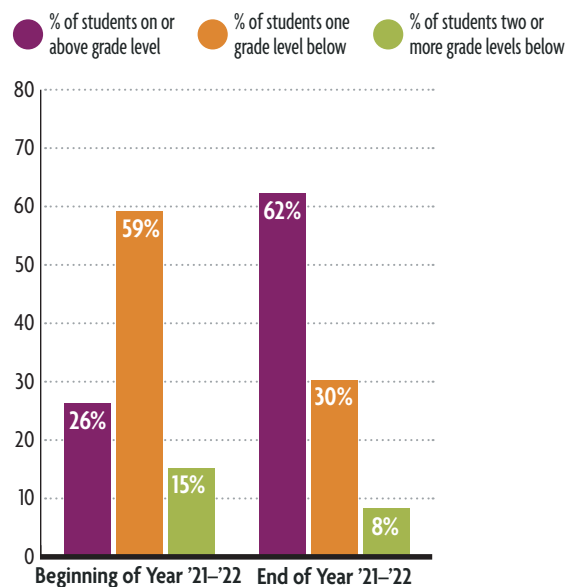


Reading: Spring 2022

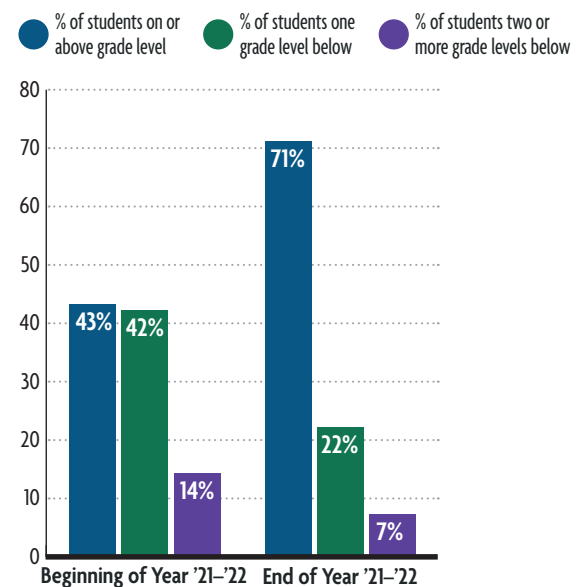


Student growth in learning as shown by i-Ready reading and math scores, from Catholic school students in Kindergarten through eighth grade.

Diocese: Math Progress 2021–2022



Diocese: Reading Progress 2021–2022



Local News Reporter, Notre Dame Alum Says "Faith Is Her Strength" On and Off the Air

BY CHRISTY PERRY TUOHEY

On Syracuse's WSYR-TV early weekend morning newscasts, she is behind the anchor desk, updating you with the latest news. What you don't see, after she signs off and unpins her lapel microphone, is her packing up 50 pounds of equipment and going out into Central New York to interview people. All in the life of a multimedia journalist, or MMJ for short.

NewsChannel 9 reporter and anchor Adrienne Smith does it all. She shoots video, she writes and edits stories, she anchors the news, and she is praying silently, all the while, that she is fulfilling God's plan for her life.

Smith grew up in Utica, New York, but she was not born there. "When I was 6 months old, I was adopted from Seoul, Korea," she explained. "My oldest brother Justin was also adopted from Seoul."

In between Justin's and Adrienne's adoptions, their parents also welcomed a biological child, a son. She sums it up this way: "I grew up in Utica my whole life, went to Notre Dame and the rest is history."

She and her older brothers attended Notre Dame Jr./Sr. High School. At Notre Dame, Smith was active in sports and ROTC, and high school is also where she got her first taste of a communications career. The school's partnership with Oneida-Herkimer-Madison BOCES gave her access to internships through the New Visions Program.

"I interned at WKTV in Utica," she said. "I grew to love it, and I knew based on the other internships I had — one was with the hospital in the PR department, another was at a radio station — I just knew that [television news] was definitely something that was viable for me."

After high school graduation in 2016, she studied radio and television at Ithaca College and got hands-on experience doing multiple jobs at the student television station. She then landed internships with NBC Sports and the "Today" show. She helped with coverage of the 2018 Winter Olympics at PyeongChang, South Korea, albeit from NBC Sports Group's Stamford, Connecticut, headquarters. Although she had hoped that would be her chance to go back to Korea, she is still happy with the way the internship led her to other opportunities.

Just as she was finishing up her degree at Ithaca, she landed a part-time job at Syracuse's NewsChannel 9, and that led to her taking the full-time MMJ and anchoring position at the station in 2019.

Smith's morning weekend anchor job means she must go to bed no later than 8 p.m. on Fridays and Saturdays and wake up at 3 a.m. to prepare for the newscasts. She finishes

out her weekend shifts by shooting, writing and editing news stories.

She has witnessed some major Central New York news in her time as a reporter, such as President Joe Biden's October 2022 visit to Onondaga Community College to speak about his administration's support for the proposed Micron Technology semiconductor chip manufacturing plant in Clay, New York.

"It was a 'pinch-me' kind of moment," she said. "I never would have expected three years into my career that I would be covering the President of the United States."

Being an Asian-American also informs Smith's work.

She initiated her station's first Asian-American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month news series, which highlighted Central New York Asian-Americans, including a Vietnamese entrepreneur who came to Syracuse as a refugee and now runs a food pantry at his business.

A reporter's life has both its highs and lows, of course. When asked about the challenges of being a journalist when criticism of news media seems at an all-time high, she tries to take it in stride. "To get that one person who says to you 'fake news' or 'the news is always bad,' I try to just brush it off. That's my mentality," she said.

More importantly, Smith says, her faith is her strength. She strives to be an objective journalist in her work. "But behind the scenes, I have Bible verses on my desk. I'm not afraid to express my faith, especially on social media, and that's part of who I am," she said.

She relies on God to guide her in the right direction. "I know that He's telling me that 'you're there for a reason,' she explained. "I feel in my heart that I know I'm doing what I'm supposed to be doing."

Christy Perry Tuohey is a freelance writer and author of several books, including her most recent, A Place of Rest for our Gallant Boys.



An alumna of Notre Dame High School, Adrienne Smith is making her mark as a journalist in Central New York.

Sr. Bernadette Reminds Her Students to Talk to God and Find Peace in His Plan

BY CAROLINE K. REFF

Sr. Bernadette Joseph Kupris, OSF, grew up on a dairy farm in Brookfield, New York, a childhood she recalls as “Heaven on earth!” that gave her a great appreciation for God’s creation. When she was in third grade, her sister joined a religious order, but, at the time, it never entered her mind that she might do the same. She was too busy attending public school, working on the farm with the cows and chickens and appreciating what she calls “a wonderful life.” But, as she grew up, she eventually did hear God calling her to become a nun. She was grateful that her family supported her but also comforted when her father told her, “You can always come back if you don’t like it.”

But, she did like it — in fact, she has loved being a part of what is now called the Sisters of St. Francis of the Neumann Communities. “From the start, it was hard work, but so was growing up on a farm, so I was used to that, and God gave me a very good life,” she said of her decision.

“Thank you, God. I have another day to live! Heaven is a wonderful place to be, but, in the meantime, I try to remind the children that we are all pilgrims on this journey. So, enjoy it, pilgrims — and live the way God expects you to!”

—SR. BERNADETTE JOSEPH KUPRIS

When she entered the order, there was a great need for teachers, and she felt that was part of her calling. She received a wonderful education, earning a bachelor’s degree from Catholic University and then a master’s degree from the University of Scranton, before returning to Central New York to start teaching in the Catholic schools.

“I started at St. James School, and from there I bounced around like a basketball wherever they needed me,” she said, eventually landing at St. Mary’s in Baldwinsville, New York, in 1984 to teach eighth grade. (At the time, St. Mary’s had grades Kindergarten through

eighth.) Over the years, she has taught most of the upper elementary school grades, and today she has a fifth grade classroom at St. Mary’s Academy, where she teaches social studies and religion to fourth, fifth and sixth graders.

In 2021, Sr. Bernadette celebrated her Golden Jubilee, and it is evident that her commitment to her vocation and Catholic education has not waned.

“Sometimes, I feel like a prehistoric dinosaur because when I began it was with chalk and blackboards at a time when the girls went to practice their cursive handwriting while the boys went out to recess,” she explained. “Now, it’s computers and all kinds of interesting technology — but the importance of faith remains the same. I guess I’m living history having seen all the changes that have occurred since I began teaching, but I continue to learn and grow, and I still find school fascinating.”

Sr. Bernadette is the only religious sister teaching at St. Mary’s Academy and one of only a handful left teaching in the Diocese of Syracuse. She continues to wear her religious habit, an outward sign of her calling and profession. And, while she admits that not many students talk about becoming sisters these days, she hopes she impresses upon her students the importance of listening to whatever plan God has for them.

“I remind them that you have to talk to God as a friend. He’ll be whispering to you. You just need to listen, and you’ll find your niche and be at peace,” she explained.

Whatever direction the children choose, she teaches them all to be people of compassion and instills the need to focus on prayer for so many around the world who are



Sr. Bernadette brings great enthusiasm and a love of learning into the classroom every day at St. Mary’s Academy.



Sr. Bernadette recently celebrated her Golden Jubilee as a Sister of St. Francis.

less fortunate. "All you have to do is turn on the news and see how many people need our prayers," she said. "I try to keep a positive attitude and help the children understand that everyone goes through bumps and bruises, but we've got it pretty good here."

Sr. Bernadette still wakes up every morning saying, "Thank you, God. I have another day to live!" as she heads off to a classroom of children at St. Mary's Academy. "Heaven is a wonderful place to be, but, in the meantime, I try to remind the children that we are all pilgrims on this journey. So, enjoy it, pilgrims — and live the way God expects you to!"

Caroline K. Reff is a freelance writer, writing instructor at Syracuse University and the editor of Pillars magazine.

Chess and Soccer Further Growth of Mind and Body

Chess & Soccer 101 is an enrichment program for grades Kindergarten through sixth grade at Holy Family School in Fairmount. The program is structured in an eight-week block that teaches children the basic fundamentals of chess and soccer. The first four weeks concentrate on chess, followed by four weeks of soccer. The program is coordinated by physical education teacher Frank Alesci.

"Our motto is 'Exercising the mind and body,'" The program was developed during the pandemic and piloted last winter at Holy Family School," Alesci said. "It has now served over 250 students in two schools. The goal and ambition of the program is continued growth throughout the Diocese so that schools can compete on the weekends in tournament-style events.



Vocation-Focused Curriculum Is Taking Root in Syracuse Catholic Schools

BY CHRISTY PERRY TUOHEY



Seminarian Benjamin Schrantz

In his Notre Dame Jr./Sr. High School days, Benjamin Schrantz was open-minded about his future studies and career. Along the way, he got involved in his school's campus ministry and went on mission trips with fellow students. After graduating from Notre Dame in 2011, he attended the State University of New York at Fredonia and earned a bachelor's degree in history. The campus's Newman Center was an important part of his four years there.

"In the school system, the campus minister for both the high school and the Newman Center were the ones who really showed me how big, how wide the faith is," he recalled.

"When I transferred over to the Catholic schools, the idea of a vocation was something we talked about occasionally in religion class during Vocations Week. It was a foreign concept. Everyone has a vocation, whether it's married life, single life, diaconate or priesthood. I love that idea."

—BENJAMIN SCHRANTZ

Fast-forwarding to 2023, Schrantz is a seminarian studying at The Catholic University of America's Theological College in Washington, D.C. In 2024, "God-willing," he will be ordained as a priest and begin serving in the Syracuse Diocese. He credits those who accompanied him on his faith journey in high school and college with helping him tune into his calling to the priesthood.

"Meeting people my own age who were on fire for the faith — it was like a little family," he said of his Newman Center group. "And just during that time, I kind of took my faith and made it my own."

A recent effort in the Syracuse Catholic schools, working in close collaboration with the Diocesan Office of Vocations, highlights the religious life in classrooms and is replicating some of what Schrantz received from influential ordained and lay people

throughout his schooling. Syracuse Catholic schools have integrated vocations education at every grade level since early 2021 as an outgrowth of the official Diocese of Syracuse's Year of Vocations.

"The Year of Vocations (which began November 14, 2020) was really meant to empower the laity to think of themselves as the first vocation promoters on the front lines," said Fr. Jason Hage, director of vocation promotion for the Diocese. "And, so we engaged in numerous trainings and meetings and gatherings and prayer opportunities to try to raise awareness."

It was a movement close to Syracuse Bishop Douglas Lucia's heart. The Bishop had been a vocation director for the Diocese of Ogdensburg, New York, and saw the opportunity for the Syracuse Diocese to become a leader in emphasizing religious life as a choice for Catholic schools students.

Just after the vocation year kick-off, Bishop Lucia brought Texas-based Vocations Ministry Founder Rhonda Gruenewald into the project. Gruenewald held virtual trainings for parishioners, Catholic Schools principals and teachers, and youth and young adult ministry leaders on how to create "vocation-producing" school environments.

Gruenewald wrote about her year working with the Syracuse Diocese on her website blog, saying, "This is the first diocese that I have encountered that has been able to engage all the major departments in the chancery, including young adult ministry, Catholic schools and Catechetical leadership for vocations. This is a new and exciting ground for vocations in the United States, and Syracuse is leading the way."

The number of lay people who participated in the Syracuse Diocese vocations ministry trainings was quite large, according to Fr. Jason. "I think over 200 laity from across the diocese, and, of the 119 parishes, we had 82 parishes represented at those trainings," he said.

The vocations-focused curriculum now implemented in Syracuse Catholic schools includes a range



Fr. Jason Hage, director of vocation promotion for the Diocese, works with those considering a vocation to the priesthood, including high schoolers in the diocesan Catholic schools.

of lessons and activities for students. At the elementary school level, students "sponsor" seminarians, to whom they write letters and for whom they pray. Some classes research their schools' alumni who have answered the call to religious life and feature them on bulletin boards or invite them to speak at their school.

Syracuse Catholic schools faculty, staff and other lay people are now equipped to listen to and encourage students who may be interested in serving the church. "They know these young people," Fr. Jason explained, "and these young people are going to be a lot more trusting of the people that accompany them on a regular basis to open up and say, 'You know, maybe I am thinking about a call to the priesthood or religious life or consecrated life.'"

Fr. Jason said the seeds being planted in diocesan schools are starting to sprout, as evidenced by the number who attended the fall 2022 St. Andrew Project, which is an outreach initiative to high

school boys that culminates in an annual dinner with the Bishop.

"We ended up with 38 high school boys and a lot of that was because of our Catholic high schools taking up that call to be the first vocation promoters on the front lines," he said.

Seminarian Schrantz was enthusiastic when told about the new vocations ministry being implemented in schools like the one in which he grew up. "When I transferred over to the Catholic schools, the idea of a vocation was something we talked about occasionally in religion class during Vocations Week. It was a foreign concept," he said. "Everyone has a vocation, whether it's married life, single life, diaconate or priesthood. I love that idea."

Christy Perry Tuohy is a freelance writer and author of several books, including her most recent, A Place of Rest for our Gallant Boys.

PERCENTAGE
OF CATHOLIC
STUDENTS:

68

AVERAGE
ELEMENTARY
CLASS SIZE:

17

TEACHER
RETENTION
RATE:

83

PERCENT

ELEMENTARY
SCHOOLS THAT
OFFER AN
EXTENDED DAY
PROGRAM:

94 PERCENT

AVERAGE NUMBER OF H.S. CLUBS
AND AFTER SCHOOL ACTIVITIES:

14

AVERAGE NUMBER OF DIFFERENT
ADVANCED COURSES OFFERED:

18

AVERAGE NUMBER OF DIFFERENT
HIGH SCHOOL TEAM SPORTS:

12



PERCENTAGE OF
SCHOOLS THAT OFFER
FULL-DAY AND
PART-TIME PRE-K:

100

Enrollment

Pre-K – Grade 6: 2,752

Grades 7 – 12: 1,095

TOTAL ENROLLMENT: 3,847

*Based on 2022–2023 NCEA data, Oct. 2022

Ethnicity*

Hispanic/Latino: 201

Non-Hispanic/Latino: 3,646

Student Demographics

(Pre-K – 12)*

Black/African-American	243	6%
American Indian/Native Alaskan:	9	<1%
Asian:	199	5%
Hawaiian/Pacific Island:	47	1%
Two or more races:	210	5%
White:	3,116	81%
Unknown:	23	<1%

*Voluntarily self-reported data



AVERAGE
JR./SR. HIGH
SCHOOL
SECTION SIZE:

16

PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS
GRADES 9-12 TAKING AT
LEAST ONE AVANCED
(AP, IB) COURSE:

53

GRADUATION RATE:

100

\$13,554,566

IN TOTAL COLLEGE
SCHOLARSHIPS OFFERED

STUDENTS
ATTENDING COLLEGE:

96

PERCENT

PERCENTAGE
OF STUDENTS
ACCEPTED
AT FIRST
CHOICE
COLLEGE:

86

STUDENTS ATTENDING
CATHOLIC COLLEGES:

24

PERCENT

Christian Service Hours

Pre-K – Grade 6

48,071

Grades 7 – 12

33,266

TOTAL

81,337

"I am very impressed with the service work that this school is involved with. I can see my child learning and wanting to give to others with an open heart."

"I love that everyone from the teachers to the principal to the food service workers know my child's name and greet her with a smile each day."

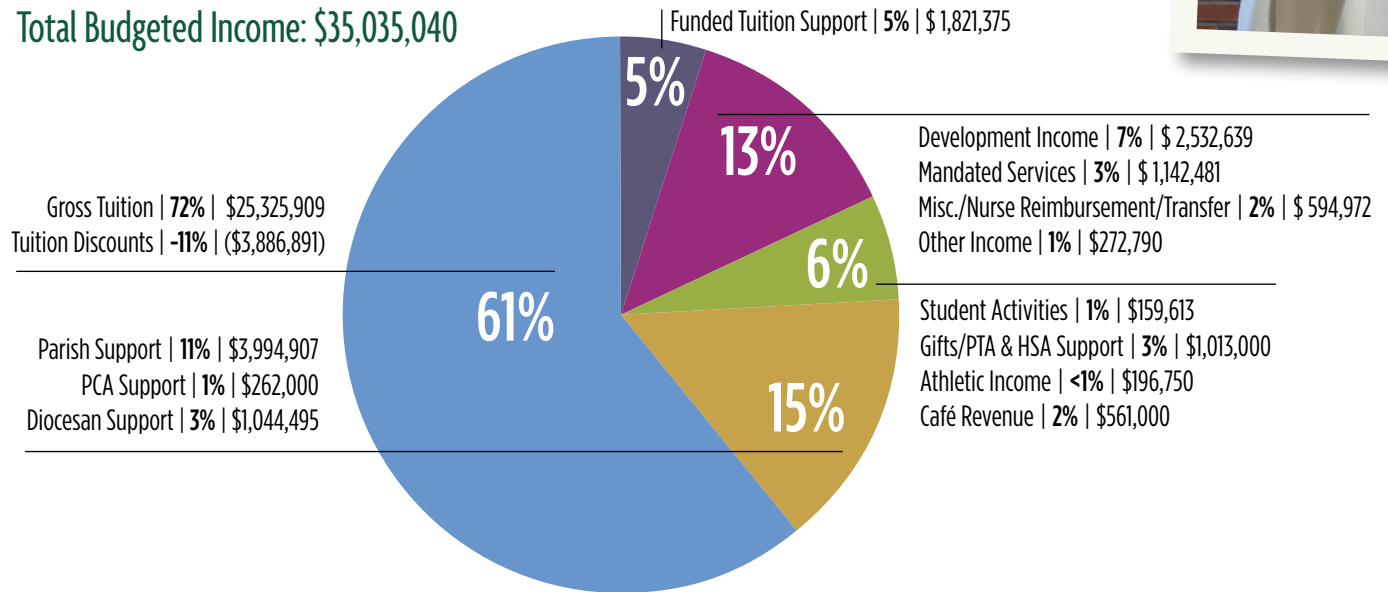


* DIRECT QUOTES FROM CATHOLIC SCHOOL PARENTS SURVEYED DURING THE 2021-2022 SCHOOL YEAR.

2021–2022 Budgeted Income and Expenses

Total Budgeted Income	\$ 35,035,040
Total Budgeted Expenses	\$ 34,805,181
Budgeted Net Income/All Schools:	\$ 229,859

Total Budgeted Income: \$35,035,040



2021–2022 AVERAGE BUDGETED COST/TUITION/SUBSIDY PER PUPIL

AVERAGE COST PER PUPIL	AVERAGE NET TUITION PER PUPIL	AVERAGE SUBSIDY NEEDED PER PUPIL	AVERAGE NET TUITION & SUBSIDY SUPPORT PER PUPIL	
\$11,289	\$6,107	\$5,182	\$7,102	◀ High School (7-12)
\$6,878	\$4,556	\$2,322	\$5,504	◀ Elementary School (K-6)*
\$8,085	\$4,980	\$3,105	\$5,969	◀ All Schools (K-12)**

*Includes Pre-K enrollment and related expenses

**Does not include support from Mother Cabrini Foundation awarded in 2021-2022

FINANCIAL AID 2021–2022

Allocations based on parent financial aid application and calculated need. Does not include local aid from individual schools. Does not include support from the Mother Cabrini Foundation in the amount of \$500,000

CENTRALLY FUNDED AID

	HOPE APPEAL TAP A*	SCUDERI FUND	HERITAGE FUND	TOTAL BY REGION	PERCENTAGE	* Partial funds include non-diocesan school.
West	\$391,125	\$68,460	\$144,062	\$603,647	61%	
North	\$9,575	\$2,039	\$4,291	\$15,905	2%	
South	\$108,725	\$21,726	\$45,720	\$176,171	18%	
East	\$115,575	\$22,775	\$47,927	\$186,277	19%	
TOTALS*	\$625,000	\$115,000	\$242,000	\$982,000	100%	



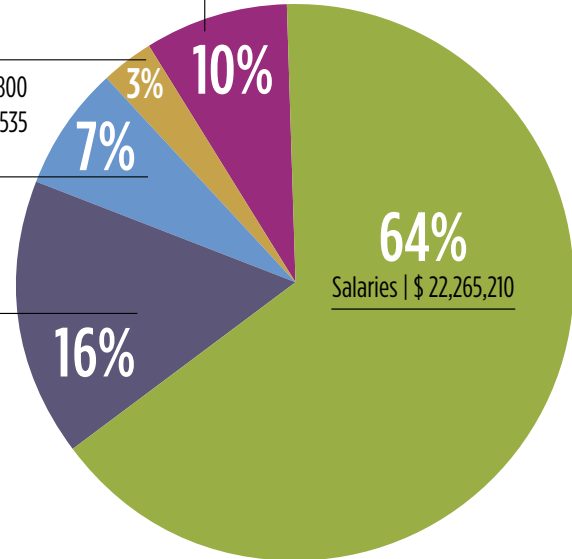
Total Budgeted Expenses: \$34,805,181

Development/Marketing | 2% | \$786,671
 Repairs and Maintenance | 3% | \$1,037,486
 Special Programs (BAC/PREK/UPK) | .5% | \$125,882
 Utilities | 2.5% | \$871,722
 Other Expenses | 2% | \$735,879

Student Activities | <1% | \$253,800
 Athletics Expenses | 2% | \$586,535

Office Expenses | 3% | \$1,091,322
 Instructional Supplies | 3% | \$924,181
 Café Expenses | 1% | \$431,915

Benefits Expenses | 16% | \$5,694,578



2021–2022 DIOCESAN SCHOOL PARISH SUPPORT BUDGETED

WESTERN REGION

Bishop Grimes Jr./Sr. High School	\$252,823
Bishop Ludden Jr./Sr. High School	\$252,823
Urban Education Support (CAP/BS/MHR)	\$332,135
Financial Aid/Educational Support	\$71,028
Parish School PCA Support (SMS/IC/St.R./HC/SMA/HFS)	\$181,406
Total Western Region	\$1,090,215

NORTHERN REGION

Trinity Catholic School	\$163,202
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SOUTHERN REGION (Broome County combined)

All Saints School, St. James School, St. John the Evangelist School, Seton Catholic Central School	
Total Southern Region	\$937,500

EASTERN REGION

Utica Notre Dame High School	\$264,950
Utica Notre Dame Elementary School	\$264,950
Rome Catholic School	\$176,764
St. Patrick's School	\$136,063
Total Eastern Region	\$842,727

* Diocesan School

Parish Support **\$3,033,644**

* Excludes parish school support

Note: The Diocesan Strategic Planning Committee approved a 25% regional reduction in the school subsidy beginning the 2020/2021 fiscal year and continues each year after that.

"I consider the money spent to send my children ... an investment rather than a cost. I am investing in my children and their future. This school provides them with a solid foundation on which they can build their lives."

Holy Cross Launches PK-3 Program to Help Families in Need

BY KIRA MADDOX

Childcare is a consistent need for working parents and guardians. So much so that the state Office of Early Learning recently invested \$970 million into state-administered prekindergarten programs for 4-year-old children. But what about younger age groups? Children younger than 4 also need care during the day and can equally benefit from an early learning environment.

That's where Holy Cross School in DeWitt saw an opportunity. After seeing the high demand for a PK-3 program at other schools in the DeWitt area, and so many families left searching for childcare opportunities, Holy Cross School decided to expand and offer one, as well.

"We wanted to offer PK-3 because there is such a real need, and we knew we could do it without having to add too much to the school," Holy Cross Principal Nina Walters said.

The new program launched in the fall 2022 after some inexpensive, minor renovations to existing classrooms at the school, according to Walters. The

PK-3 program currently has 12 children enrolled and is a complement to the school's existing PK-4 program. Expanding offerings to even younger children allows the school to help more working parents and guardians in need of childcare.

In Pre-K, or prekindergarten, children are placed in a more structured academic setting. The focus is not only on education but on preparing them to make the transition into kindergarten and the traditional school system. According to New York State Education Department learning outcomes, children who complete a prekindergarten program are more likely to have a rudimentary foundation in creative problem solving, better social abilities, be able to follow and adapt to a changing routine and use an expressive vocabulary. Children will also have a better understanding of counting and sorting, identifying patterns and even basic science and social studies.

Pauley Gasparis enrolled both of her children in Holy Cross School's prekindergarten programs for the first time this academic year. Her daughter is in

Holy Cross School established a PK-3 program to help meet a demand in the community.





the new PK-3 program, and her son is in PK-4. She said she and her children have loved the experience so far.

"I've really seen my child blossom and grow in only a few short months," she said.

Gasparis and her husband are both physicians, working at Crouse Hospital and Upstate Medical University, respectively. With long hours and demanding responsibilities, they needed safe, reliable childcare. The warmth and flexibility Holy Cross School offered was what finally sold her on the program. Some programs only offer part-time childcare coverage. At Holy Cross, Gasparis said she's able to drop her children off before her shift and pick them up at the end of the work day.

"I feel so safe and secure knowing they're in a learning environment while I'm at work," Gasparis said. "It puts my mind at ease, and I know they're getting that mental stimulation."

The occasional overlap between the Pre-K classes was also an added bonus as a parent of two. Gasparis said PK-3 and PK-4 students often have specialty classes and lunch together. While her son and daughter get to meet and socialize with new children their own age in their separate classrooms, they also get time during the day to be with someone familiar.

The new program has also been a benefit to Holy Cross School. Walters said the additional program was able to help the school boost its overall enrollment numbers. While it's still too early to tell what lies ahead for the new PK-3 students, Walters said usually about 50% of students enrolled in a Holy Cross School prekindergarten program go on to enroll for kindergarten to 6th grade.

"We've gained some new, wonderful families," she said. "We hope they can continue with us."

Kira Maddox is a freelance writer from Utica, New York.

Piecing Together the Faith

This beautiful mural is the culmination of months of work creating religious themed art under the direction of art teacher Sybil Preski. The idea was to create a mosaic mural honoring the Rome Catholic School community's faith and love of Jesus. The masterpiece began with students in second through sixth grades researching artists that used symbolism to express ideas and continued with math skills to figure out how many 2-inch squares would be needed to make the project come together. Students chose warm colors for the cross to represent the love of Jesus and cool colors for the background to represent the calm feeling faith can give. They created each square using line, shape, pattern, rhythm and focal points, creating abstract designs, word designs and hidden pictures in the tiles. Once everything was assembled, the piece was framed courtesy of The Rome Art and Community Center and was displayed at many of the churches through the Rome area, finding its permanent home at Rome Catholic School. "This is a wonderful example of teamwork and cooperation through living Christ's teaching," said Preski. "The students really loved making this mural, and it will serve as a beautiful piece of art celebrating our faith."



Ready, Set, Launch! Project-based Learning at Seton Catholic

BY ELIZABETH CARTER, PH.D.

Seton Catholic Central High School in Binghamton has transformed their business and entrepreneurship class into a flagship project-based learning curriculum called "Ready, Set, Launch!" Through this new curriculum, the school has embraced a can-do mindset in which they empower students to think creatively and express themselves in their own voice.

The curriculum began with the hiring of faculty member and Seton alum Nicholas Wan, an internationally recognized curriculum designer and businessman. He believes that if we demonstrate a "life does not present us problems, it presents us with challenges" mindset, that students will learn the creative and critical thinking skills necessary to excel in life. He designed the curriculum in response to questions that many educators grapple with, including how we can help our students cultivate a love for learning, think creatively and "outside the box."

"I have always had a particular teaching philosophy when working with young people. I don't view them any different from me just because of my age.

I remember when I was a high school student. I often worked with adults on marquis projects for the school system, and I saw the immense value-add that my youth offered. I promised myself that whenever I am their age, I will fervently seek the outlook and opinions of the youth because they intuitively understand the trends. While it is my role as their instructor to teach them, I do not believe it is my role to teach at them. The latter approach lacks humility. I want to first build rapport with my students so that they trust me, and part of that process means letting them know that I am there to equip them," explained Wan.

He uses project-based learning and explains that it is different than the learning in the traditional classroom environment. Instead of memorizing basic knowledge and concepts, the students are given a real-world challenge to address either as a group or alone if they prefer. The real-world challenge can be summarized in a "driving question," such as the one Seton students are exploring this year: "How can I create a profitable, scaled business?"

Wan teaches students about how human psychology impacts buying decisions, how brands prime customers and create value in the market and how to create products and services that are highly marketable. The students learn from some of the world's most recognizable brands, such as Apple, Tesla and Amazon, and have Zoom conferences with real-world business people. Every week the students can apply the skills they acquire to their actual business. Christian Taber, a ninth grade student, remarked: "What I love about this class is how each part of the project we are actively working on dictates what the day's lecture will be about, not the other way around. It's all based on the project, and



Seton Catholic student participated in Ready, Set, Launch!, which empowers students' creativity.

therefore we never know what the class may be about every day. We will get into a discussion about a certain aspect of the project and the lecture will break down the necessary knowledge to complete the task. In doing so, we're gaining real-life experience and immediately applying what we have learned."

When students are empowered and treated like adults, they also learn valuable skills that a textbook could never provide them. Skills such as time management, how to resolve conflict amongst a team and how to make others feel included while winning them over to your ideas. The teacher constantly provides support and feedback so that the students feel proud of their work. Wan has seen this approach work firsthand and the students' eyes light up when they realize that the quality and viability of their business can compete with anyone — regardless of age.

"This class and the project has been an innovative and enjoyable way to learn the world of business. It has allowed us to freely contribute and let our ideas flow without judgement in a gratifying environment. The culture of our class makes us comfortable with failure, knowing we can fall back on each other and Mr. Wan. His classes may seem like fun but there is a lot of serious learning going on. This is such an amazing opportunity for us to get involved with our school and our community while still learning how to start and run a business. Each one of us feels like an integral part of the process and I know every one of us will be the most confident and capable people coming out of Mr. Wan's class," Jeanna Whiteman, an eleventh grade student, explained.

At the end of the day, once students realize that the world is impacted by the ideas of people no different than them; it gives them a transformative view on life.

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Monday, June 19, 2023
Shenendoah Golf Club at
Turning Stone Resort Casino

Golf Tournament proceeds to benefit
 Catholic schools scholarships



For more information scan this QR code
 or email jspector@syrdiocese.org

Bishop Ludden IB Program Prepares Students for Challenges of Higher Ed

BY KIRA MADDOX

Bishop Ludden Jr./Sr. High School graduated the first cohort of its new International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme in Spring 2022. Eight seniors left the program with a specialized diploma and potentially dozens of college credits. Unlike other college prep programs and Advanced Placement classes, IB is an internationally recognized curricula that pushes its students more than just academically.

"This program, more than anything else, will put you in an extra strong spot for college," said Heidi Busa, coordinator of the IB program at Bishop Ludden. "If you can do this, your first year at college should be very easy."

IB was established in 1968 at the International School of Geneva and is considered the worldwide gold standard for education. It works from a global perspective to encourage students to think critically, challenge assumptions, develop independent thought and hone their research skills. The curricula has nine courses: three standard-level courses, three high-level

courses and then three courses in what's known as the Diploma Programme core. The core courses are where the more creative and critical thinking skills are developed.

In Theory of Knowledge, students reflect on the meaning of knowledge and how they know what they think they know. In Creativity, Activity and Service, students complete an independent project relating to those subjects. Coordinating a blood drive, hosting a sock drive for cancer patients and working with a landscaper for a usability study are just some of the independent projects previous IB students have completed on their own. In the third core course, called Extended Essay, students conduct an independent research piece, culminating with a 4,000-word paper.

"Students are getting recognized by really competitive colleges and universities, and it's because of IB," Busa said.

As an international program, student success is measured both internally and externally. That means



"This program, more than anything else, will put you in an extra strong spot for college. If you can do this, your first year at college should be very easy."

—HEIDI BUSA, COORDINATOR OF THE IB PROGRAM

while some of their work is graded in class by their instructors at Bishop Ludden, other pieces are sent to IB experts abroad. With more than 5,500 schools in 160 countries, IB creates a high level standard that transcends disparities between individual students, schools or districts.

Madison Moen '22 was one of the students in the inaugural IB Diploma class. She's now enrolled at St. Bonaventure University pursuing childhood education. Moen said she saw herself as a dedicated student and enrolled in IB to try and push herself academically.

"Without the IB program, I don't think I would have been prepared for college," she said. "I experienced a level of work I normally wouldn't have."

Moen said the IB program is about more than lab work and taking notes. The classes had questions that made her think. Students discussed whether math was created, invented or discovered. They collaborated with their peers and their teacher, navigating the new program. They debated theory with classmates, something not usually seen in an

average high school classroom. And, she said they wrote a lot of papers, even outside English class.

But, Moen said the challenging curriculum helped ease her anxiety about being ready for college. Completing the IB Diploma was the equivalent of 46 college credits. When she was assigned a 30-page research paper in her first semester, Moen said she felt extremely prepared.

Students at Bishop Ludden can either take individual IB courses or attempt to earn the full IB diploma. Interested students work with their guidance counselor to determine if IB is a good fit for them. Students who enroll in the IB program can expect to work hard, but they'll be more prepared for college-level expectations.

"It's very rigorous, but it gives you way more benefits in the long-run," Moen said. "When you get to college, everything will feel easier, and you'll have more confidence that you can succeed."

Kira Maddox is a freelancer writer from Utica, New York.



Catholic Schools Week 2023

Across the Diocese, our students celebrated Catholic Schools Week, Jan. 30 through Feb. 3, with fun and faith-filled activities that reminded everyone just how special our Catholic School community is. The theme for this year's celebration was *Catholic Schools: Faith. Excellence. Service.* Many of our schools opened the week with special Sunday masses, open houses, uniform dress-down days, and many exciting and educational activities that involved not only the students, but parents, families and the parish community, as well. Here are just some of the highlights of the activities that took place in our 21 schools.



Notre Dame Elementary School celebrated our great nation with a tribute to area veterans. Students came to school dressed in red, white and blue to mark the occasion.



Holy Family School in Norwich held a Vocations Day, asking students to dress up to represent the profession they would one day like to pursue.



Students at St. Patrick's School in Oneida learned how to make corn husk dolls from a member of the neighboring Oneida Indian Nation. That same day, students had a dress down day that took them away to the tropics with colorful clothing.



A team of students from Kindergarten through sixth grade helped put together the Catholic Schools Week mass at Immaculate Conception School in Fayetteville.



St. Rose of Lima School shared Breakfast with Buddies, where younger students had a meal with an older student "buddy" and then had some story time.

All Saints Elementary School celebrated Career Day where parents and other community members visited the classrooms to educate students about what their various job responsibilities are. From vet techs to police officers, robotics manufacturers and doctors, there was something for every student's interests.



Coordinated by the school's STEM Club, Trinity Catholic School hosted a STEM Night for students in Pre-K through sixth grade and their families to promote the importance of science, technology, engineering and math.



New Principals Going Strong in 2022-23 School Year

BY EILEEN JEVIS

The nationwide teacher shortage has been in the headlines for months. In the Syracuse City School District, there are 300 open teaching positions, far more than any other district in Onondaga County. As school districts across the country scramble to find qualified instructors, administrators will be faced with the challenge of providing a quality education to their students through agility, coordination and a commitment to excellence.

The Catholic Schools in the Diocese of Syracuse filled several principal vacancies in the 2022-23 academic year. The administrators we talked to are excited to reconnect with students, parents, teachers and staff.

PATRICK MONACHINO

SETON CATHOLIC CENTRAL SCHOOL



Patrick Monachino graduated from Seton Catholic Central School in Binghamton and is now the new principal there. He earned a degree in history and political Science from the University of Scranton with a minor in theology. Monachino attended Providence College in Rhode Island and entered the Providence Alliance for Catholic Teachers program, an initiative designed for aspiring Catholic teachers and leaders. After earning a master's degree in education and history, he returned to Seton as a social studies and theology teacher until he was appointed assistant principal. In 2020, Monachino was appointed principal of St. James Elementary School in Johnson City. Then, he was appointed principal of Seton Catholic Central School in July 2022.

Monachino said that he looks forward to reconnecting with teachers, families and staff that are like a second family to him. "Spending nearly half my life at SCC has been among the most gratifying experiences of my life," he said. "I'm also looking forward to building on the great work done by our previous principal, Matthew Martinkovic while taking SCC to the next level." Monachino urges students to get involved. "We have so much to offer students socially, athletically and religiously," he said. He also encourages parents to be involved in their children's education. "We want to welcome everyone back to the building in our post-COVID world."

NINA WALTERS

HOLY CROSS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL



Nina Walters, a proud graduate of Holy Cross Elementary School, has served in various administrative positions and as its school nurse for the past 10 years. Walters earned a bachelor's degree in nursing with a minor in biology from Franciscan University in Steubenville, Ohio. She is currently pursuing a master's certificate in Catholic School Leadership from Creighton University.

"I am very excited and honored to be chosen as principal at Holy Cross," said Walters. "My vision for the future is to unite both Church and school and build a strong Catholic identity for the school."

Walters said one of her goals is to retain amazing teachers who are both excited and dedicated to Catholic education, as well as the education of the whole child - body, mind, and spirit. "Another goal is to build back the community atmosphere among families and students after COVID." Her advice to her students is to begin the school year with renewed enthusiasm. "The children in our schools deserve a normal school year to build positive lifelong memories of their time in Catholic schools," said Walters. "The school should be an extension of your family; a place where each child feels loved and respected and encouraged to be the very best that they can be."

EMILY REGAN

ST. JOHN THE EVANGELIST SCHOOL



Emily Regan is the new principal at St. John the Evangelist School in Binghamton. Regan earned her bachelor's degree in special education from SUNY Plattsburg and a master's degree in elementary reading from SUNY Cortland. Regan also has an advanced certificate as a literary coach from Lesley University in Cambridge, Massachusetts, and a certificate of advanced study in building administration and district administration from SUNY Cortland. Her long career in education includes over 20 years at the Chenango Forks School District and as principal at Thomas J Watson Sr. Elementary in Union-Endicott. After officially retiring from Union-Endicott, she continued as a substitute principal.

Regan said that God presented her with the opportunity to join the Catholic Schools of Broome County as principal of St. John the Evangelist School. "I'm so very blessed that God is not done with me yet," she said. "He has a new assignment for me, and I couldn't be happier."

Regan encouraged students and families to start the school year with a renewed excitement and desire to learn and grow as a school community. The school's theme this year is, "Be the saint God created you to be."

JIM ABRAMS

ST. JAMES SCHOOL



Jim Abrams returns as principal to St. James in Johnson City, the school where he began his teaching career 40 years ago. Abrams and his wife were married at St. James Church in 1986. When he arrived at St. James in the beginning of July, he anticipated the interim position might last just a few months.

"I quickly realized how much I wanted to be in this school long term and was so excited when I was asked to stay on through the end of the school year," said Abrams.

He earned his bachelor's degree at Le Moyne College and a master's degree in social sciences from Binghamton University. He also earned a Certificate of Advanced Studies in School Leadership from SUNY Cortland. Prior to his service at St. James, Abrams taught for six years in Broome County Schools and 13 years at Whitney Point Central Schools.

"Schools are dynamic environments that continue to draw me in and inspire me to continue to grow intellectually and spiritually," he said. "We will all make mistakes and face challenges along the way, but remember that we have a loving God that walks with us on this journey; a loving Father who wants nothing more than for us to turn to Him."

While enrollment in the Catholic Schools of the Diocese continues to increase, so, too, does the commitment of the administrators, teachers and support staff who work diligently each day to provide students with a quality education while empowering them to live their faith with compassion, integrity and respect.

This article was reprinted with permission from The Catholic Sun.

Class of 2022 Vals and Sals Excel in College

Congratulations to the valedictorians and salutatorians from the Class of 2022. These students, now well into their first year of college, represent some of the best and brightest of our Catholic schools. We congratulate them, their teachers, families and all who supported them during their years of education with the Syracuse Catholic Diocese, and we pray for their continued success as they move forward to spread God's message and use their gifts to better the world for all.

BISHOP GRIMES JR./SR. HIGH SCHOOL

Valedictorian: Isabella Macro (Ithaca College)

Salutatorian: Zachary Schaubroeck
(Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute)

BISHOP LUDDEN JR./SR. HIGH SCHOOL

Valedictorian: Victoria Parsons (Le Moyne College)

Salutatorian: Ava DiRubbo (University of Pittsburgh)

NOTRE DAME JR./SR. HIGH SCHOOL

Valedictorian: Juliet Thistleton (Clarkson University)

Salutatorian: Hayley Heffernan (University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill)

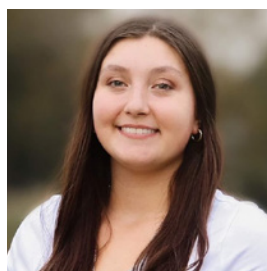
SETON CATHOLIC CENTRAL SCHOOL

Valedictorian: Christian Kang (Yale University)

Salutatorian: Lincoln Lin (Purdue University)



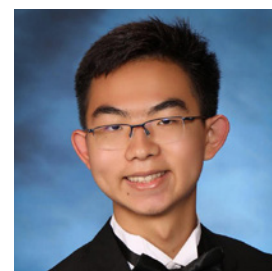
Isabella Macro



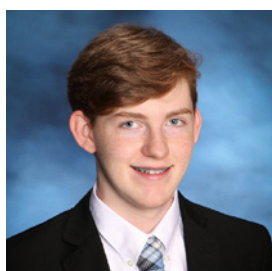
Victoria Parsons



Juliet Thistleton



Christian Kang



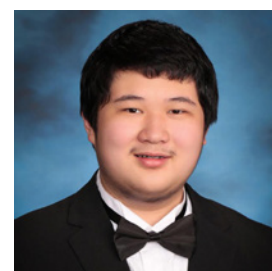
Zachary Schaubroeck



Ava DiRubbo



Hayley Heffernan



Lincoln Lin





Pillars

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On Our Cover:

Sr. Bernadette Joseph Kupris, a teacher at St. Mary's Academy in Baldwinsville has been working with students in the diocese for more than 50 years.

SCHOOL	CITY	PHONE	WEB PAGE
All Saints Catholic School	Endicott	607-748-7423	setoncatholicallsaints.org
Bishop Grimes Jr./Sr. High School	E. Syracuse	315-437-0356	bishopgrimes.org
Bishop Ludden Jr./Sr. High School	Syracuse	315-468-2591	bishopludden.org
Blessed Sacrament School	Syracuse	315-463-1261	blessedsacramentschool.org
Cathedral Academy at Pompei	Syracuse	315-422-8548	capsyracuse.org
Diocesan Catholic Schools Office	Syracuse	315-422-7203	syracusediocese.org
Holy Cross School	Dewitt	315 446-4890	hcschooldewitt.org
Holy Family School	Norwich	607-337-2207	hfsnorwich.org
Holy Family School	Syracuse	315-487-8515	holyfamilyschoolsyr.org
Immaculate Conception School	Fayetteville	315-637-3961	icschool.org
Most Holy Rosary School	Syracuse	315-476-6035	mhrsyr.org
Notre Dame Elementary School	Utica	315-732-4374	notredameutica.org
Notre Dame Jr./Sr. High School	Utica	315-724-5118	notredameutica.org
Rome Catholic School	Rome	315-336-6190	romecatholic.org
Seton Catholic Central	Binghamton	607-723-5307	csbcsaints.org
St. James School	Johnson City	607-797-5444	stjamesschooljc.org
St. John the Evangelist School	Binghamton	607-723-0703	sjebing.org
St. Mary's Academy	Baldwinsville	315-635-3977	smabville.org
St. Mary's School	Cortland	607-756-5614	smscortland.org
St. Patrick's School	Oneida	315-363-3620	stpatricksona.org
St. Rose of Lima School	North Syracuse	315-458-6036	stroseny.org
Trinity Catholic School	Oswego	315-343-6700	oswegotrinitycatholic.org



Syracuse Diocese
Catholic Schools