

SAINT THOMAS SCHOOL NEWSLETTER

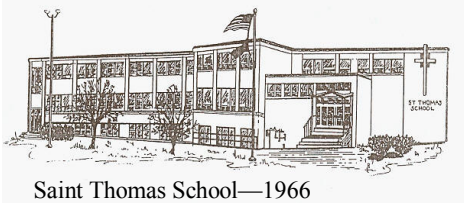


for
Alumni and Friends



Volume 4, Issue 1

September, 2011



Saint Thomas School—1966



Saint Thomas School 2011-2012



Pastor's Message:

As we begin another School Year, I am filled with a sense of excitement and anticipation, wondering what the Lord has in store for us this year. Where will He lead us in the coming nine months?



Today I presided at the Opening Mass of the School Year. We, as a church celebrated the Feast of the Birth of Mary. We are also preparing for the 10th anniversary of the tragic events of '9-11'.

I suggested to the school community in my homily that it was appropriate for us to remember these two celebrations that wrap nicely into a theme for the coming school year. Much of the publicity surrounding this anniversary of 9-11 centers around how those who lost loved ones back then are dealing with that loss. And it occurred to me that if we do not become Christ-bearers in our own lives, if we do not attempt to respond to evil and hate with love and forgiveness, then the terrorists win.

Mary was a most unlikely person to be selected to be the mother of the Son of God. Yet, that she was. She was called to be **the** Christ-bearer for our world. But we all are called to be Christ-bearers, to bring the love and peace and mercy and forgiveness of Jesus into our corner of the world.

I hope and pray that we can infuse this spirit, this ideal, this truth into our young people through all that we say and do as St. Thomas School, so that through each of **our** lives, the world might become a better place, and **we** might facilitate the building of the Father's Kingdom of true and lasting peace.

Fr. Nick Melo

Saint Thomas School opened on August 30, 2011, one day later than planned thanks to "IRENE", with 172 students ready and eager to begin the next school year. Returning students were pleasantly surprised to find the school looking much different with a freshly designed parking lot with upgraded landscaping and brand new custom window coverings installed in each classroom! The technology enhancements are ongoing with SMART interactive computer boards installed in Mrs. Pelczar's 7th grade classroom and in the 2nd floor computer lab. Other upgrades



and enhancements students and parents can look forward to throughout the year include the hot lunch program and the on-line grading program for middle school students. The hot lunch program, provided daily by Paul Gregory's of Center Street, Southington, has been designed this year to include very



healthy menu choices. Mrs. Wirkus, school principal, and Mrs. Michelle Porter, lunch coordinator, worked to establish a more health-conscious alternative, and Paul Gregory's was happy to oblige! Regarding the middle school grading, parents will be given a password to enter the website and view their students progress. These and many more on-going projects continue to advance Saint Thomas School to a competitive level of educating the whole child, as our mission states: "dedicated to developing lifelong learners, instilling Christian values, guiding students to a personal relationship with Christ and fostering a positive self-image."

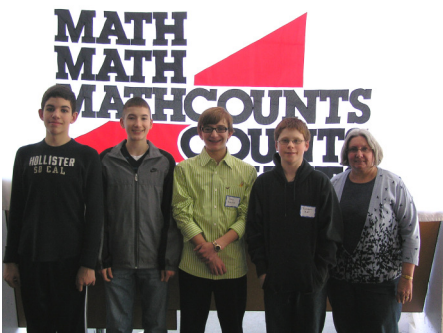
**Saint Thomas School Students make a "splash"
and other accomplishments!**



Dominic Nazzaro, 8th grader, competed this past summer in the Greater Hartford Country Club Swimming Championships. He won the 50-yard free, backstroke and butterfly championships, breaking the long standing records in both the freestyle and backstroke at Shuttle Meadow Country Club in Kensington, where he is a member. Congratulations to Dominic!



Siblings Caleigh and Zachary Waskowicz were participants in the USA Water Ski Eastern Regionals this summer held in Canajoharie, NY. Zachary finished 4th in the boys age 9 and under division with a Slalom score of 25. He's ranked 4th in the state! Caleigh competed and came in 5th in the girls age 10 -13 division with a score of 31. She is the only ranked water skier in Connecticut in her division. Nationally, she ranked 88th, while Zachary holds the 54th spot.

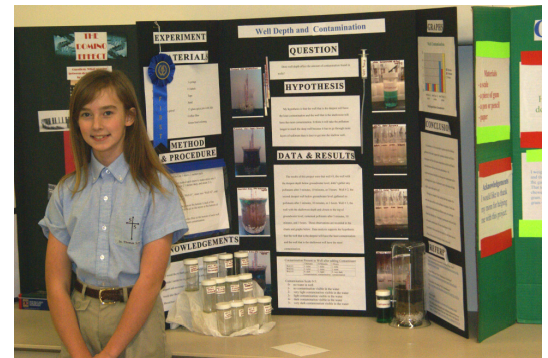


The 2011 MATHCOUNTS CLUB achieved Gold Level Status at the spring competition. Coached by 7th grade teacher, Pauline Pelczar (far right), the students must complete five monthly challenges, and additionally at least 4 students must score 80% or higher on the Ultimate Math Challenge. Each math challenge contained creative and challenging math problems covering a range of topics in the middle-school math curriculum. Pictured with Mrs. Pelczar are:

Matthew Mazzatto, Brendan Carroll, Joey Zacchia and Jameson Kief.



Seventh grader Anthony Dortenzio recently competed at the Nutmeg Games in Archery. In only his second year of competition, he took home the "GOLD"! Last year, Anthony won the silver medal. He first began shooting after spending a summer at Camp Sloper 4 years ago, and is now a member of the X-Caliber Archery Club in Woodstock. Anthony's dad, Charles, has also taken up the sport, and admits he has trouble keeping up with his son!



Caleigh Waskowicz is one of 300 semifinalists (named from more than 6,000 entries) in the 2011 Broadcom MASTERS, a program of Society for Science & the Public for her Science Fair project. Her recognition of accomplishment earned her a prize of \$25 Wal-mart gift card, and her teacher, Mrs. Pelczar, receives \$250 worth of Elmer's merchandise for the classroom and a set of Sally Ride Career Books.



AFTER 25 YEARS OF TEACHING

Retirement is the new occupation for Mr. and Mrs. Zemliauskas, affectionately known to their students by Mr. and Mrs. "Z". After 25 years combined teaching of Art and the Primary Grades, the "Z"s are enjoying their time relaxing, by traveling to see their sons in Colorado and Florida. While this chapter in their lives is rewarding and well deserved, they miss the students at Saint Thomas. Log on to our school website alumni page to leave them a message (www.st-thomasschool.org). Messages will be printed in the next newsletter edition.

Letter from the Principal

Welcome ST. Thomas Alumni!



When I reflect on St. Thomas School, I am aware of the importance of our alumni. You are the ones that enable us to be the excellent school that we are presently. You have sacrificed in many ways that may never be known. You have entrusted your children and grandchildren to our care. Know that through you, St. Thomas is alive and growing.

Let me take this opportunity to invite you to come and tour our beautiful school that includes our full time Pre-k – grade 8 classrooms. You will be surprised at the changes that have taken place over the years.

St. Thomas School has 172 students this year of which about 10% live outside of Southington. Catholic Religious education is an integral part of the daily curriculum and mutual respect, self discipline and responsibility are developed through close teacher-student relationships.

ST. Thomas is accredited by the New England Association of Schools and Colleges and will be eligible this year to apply for Blue Ribbon status. Our students consistently achieve above the national average on test scores especially in the areas of Math and Language Arts. We are proud to announce that we currently have a chapter of the National Junior Honor Society named after Father Michael McVeery. Thirteen students have been enrolled in this chapter since it began last year.

St. Thomas continues to have a dedicated and supportive HSA who tirelessly run all of our fundraising events. The School Board also is very active in securing the future of STS and has developed a strategic plan for the next five years.

We hope you enjoy reading the articles in this newsletter and hope you will be contributors of information in future issues.

God bless you all.

Sincerely,

MaryPat Wirkus

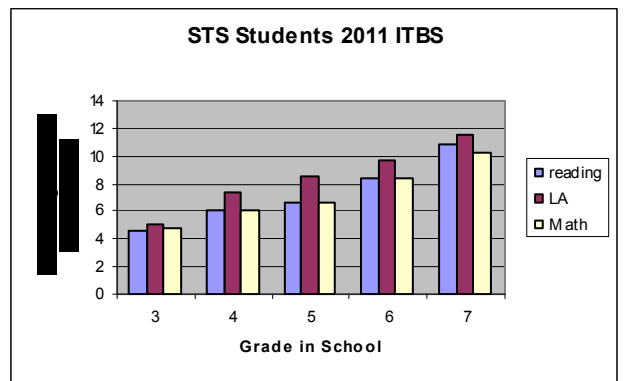
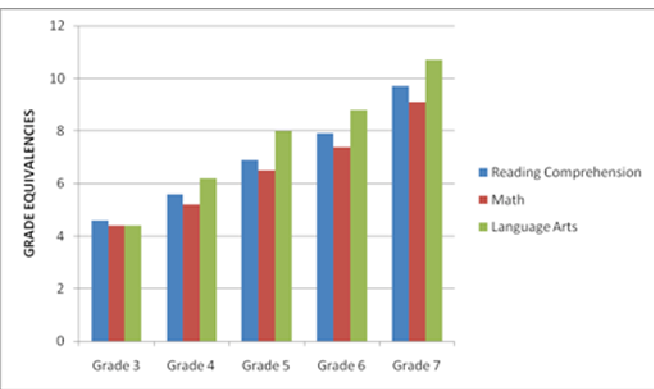
2011-2012 Faculty Roster

Pre-K—Mrs. Jamie Rose Neimann	5th grade—Mrs. Patricia Whalen	Spanish—Mr. Daniel Belfi
Kindergarten—Mrs. Barbara Peshka	6th grade—Ms. Marie Manchak	Music—Mrs. Raimonda Janiskas
1st grade—Mrs. Marilyn Descoteaux	7th grade—Mrs. Pauline Pelczar	Art—Mrs. Courtney Drechsler
2nd grade—Mr. Patrick Hergott	8th grade—Mr. Dennis Beaupre	Physical Ed—Ms. Jolene Miceli
3rd grade—Ms. Carol Gosselin	Pre- K aide— Mrs. Mary Shanahan	Librarian—Mrs. Lynn Bairos
4th grade—Ms. Mary Stratton	Kindergarten Aide—Ms. Tricia Harrold	

STUDENTS MAKING THE GRADE!

Elementary students in grades 3-7 each year take the ITBS (Iowa Test of Basic Skills) to measure performance in Math, Reading and Language Arts. Below are the results of students in the Archdiocese of Hartford as compared to the standard grade level. For example, the average Catholic School 3rd grader is reading above the 4th grade level, and the average 7th grader is testing in LA at almost the 11th grade level.

Locally, the students at Saint Thomas are all testing at the next grade level or higher. See the graph below, data provided by Principal MaryPat Wirkus.



THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT!

The Office of Catholic Schools in conjunction with Saint Thomas School is delighted to report the success of the 1st Annual Fund Appeal conducted over the past 3 years. We are very grateful for all the donations and we look forward to hearing from you in future appeals. Every attempt has been made to list the donations accurately. Please contact Robin Taillie, Advancement Director at rtaillie@gmail.com to report any errors.

Class Notes!

Pastor's Circle (\$500-999)

Mark Brady

Principal's Circle (\$250-499)

Karen Avitabile

John Keller

Barry Thorton

Centennial Circle (\$100-249)

Margaret Baker

Patrick Clynes

Ann Marie Dimauro

Joan Estra

Maureen Gagnon

Donna Kraus

Annabelle Lasek

Stanley Maigarie

Betsy Manware

Andrew Meade

Kathleen Potrepka

Sean Scally

Mark Wooding

Patron's Circle (\$50-99)

Thomas Angels

Anne Clarke

Mary Derynioski

Barbara Fedoras

Tanya Galvin

Kathryn Keen

Steven Lippia

Joan Murphy

Timothy Walsh

Tiger Club (\$1-49)

Joseph Albiach

Mary Bonfitto

Robert Brick

Michael Cavaliere

Terry Cesario

David Donna

Robert Doran

Kathleen Doran

Colleen Flynn

Paul Giammatteo

Barbara Glaude

Martin Jansen

Cheryl Leahy

Michael Manware

Vina Nadeau

Kristen Nigro

Deborah Smyser

Steven Whalen

Tom White

Donna Godici Violette '70 writes: I really enjoyed my years at St. Thomas 7-8-9. It was a nice bunch of kids. High school was much different!

Gerald Cassella '72 writes: There was GREAT SCHOOL SPIRIT!

Thomas Slodzinski '73 writes: I enjoyed my time at St. Thomas. The curriculum was hard but it prepared me for further education. Also, it kept me focused on God and the importance of respect and being good to others.

Michael Telfer '73 writes: I remember what it was like to be a Saint Thomas Tiger! I made the basketball team but was suspended due to insufficient grades! I learned a valuable lesson!

Kathryn Hart Keen '81 writes: I was very happy at St. Thomas and formed many lifetime friendships. I played volleyball and basketball and liked Miss Conway a lot!

Susan Hart Castellano '84 writes: My favorite teacher was Miss Conway!

Sara Greeley Ricciadone '96 writes: Having such a small class enabled us to be a close knit group. Playing after school activities and singing on the stage in 6th grade were some of my favorite memories!

Justin Miano '98 writes: I enjoyed the field trips, Christmas sale, Christmas holiday concert, St. Thomas basketball, Gingerbread houses, 3rd grade with Ms. Sullivan, pumpkin decorating and the Phantom of the Opera!

We'd love to hear from you! Please visit the school webpage at www.st-thomasschool.org and click on the alumni page. Here you can update your information for our records so we can keep you informed of current happenings and you can send us your milestones, comments or just a greeting to your fellow classmates!

Alternatively, send your updates to:

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Southington, CT 06489

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