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FALL / WINTER 2015

THE BUSY BEAK

THE ST. FRANCIS DE SALES SCHOOL NEWSLETTER

MIDDLE STATES Re-Accreditation Visit

By Christan McIntyre

On October 5th through October 8th, St. Francis welcomed three professional educators who arrived to our campus and served as the Visiting Team for the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools. The Commission on Elementary Schools for the Middle States Association serves as the evaluative accrediting body that requires schools of our ilk to adhere to a strict protocol of standards in the following educational areas: Mission, Governance & Leadership, School Improvement Planning, Finances, Facilities, School Organization, Health & Safety, Educational Programs, Assessment & Evidence of Student Learning, Student Services, Student Life, and Information Resources.

For the past year and a half, the teachers, staff, students, and parents of St. Francis have contributed to the development of this reflective and visionary self-study. From their collective contributions, the faculty and staff utilized observational and supported data to create an Action Plan intended to further enhance the strength of program that we provide to our school families.

The Middle States visit began on October 5th with a "Welcome Dinner" for our Visiting Team that was generously prepared by alumnus Mr. Tony Triglia and was attended by members of the Steering Committee and our parish clergy. Following a student-led tour, the Visiting Team enjoyed a scrumptious "Dessert Reception" that was attended by parents, students, faculty, and staff. This special evening concluded with a professionally created video presentation that was produced by former SFdS parent Mr. Tom Taylor. This thoughtful production offered our Visiting Team a personal view on the profound impact that the St. Francis experience has on the lives of our school community members.



Students helped illustrate our school's belief statement in preparation for the visit.

Throughout the remainder of their stay, the Visiting Team enjoyed a first-hand observation of a SFdS school day as the team moved from class to class. In addition, their schedule included interview meetings with students, faculty and staff, parents, the Steering Committee and the School Board. On the final day of their visit, the Middle States Visiting Team presented an oral report that praised the strength of our school program and applauded the unique spirit that permeates our campus. And at the conclusion of their final report, the Visiting Team shared without hesitation that they would recommend our re-accreditation to the Middle States Commission as a result of our thorough and complete fulfillment of all twelve of the standards set forth within the Excellence by Design protocol. Although the final determination of re-accreditation isn't rendered until the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools Commission reviews the final report, the recommendation from the Visiting Team confirmed the success of the reflective and evaluative assessment that we offered this process, as well as affirmed the Excellence in Education and Foundation of Faith that SFdS continues to provide to our school families as we have done for the past 65 years.

Andrew Welch Donates Materials, Time, and Talent to Build Stunning Prayer Cross

By Caitlyn Paley

Each morning at St. Francis de Sales Catholic School, students and faculty come together in the Long Parish Center for our daily Community Meeting. The students sit in neat rows while a classmate leads the school in prayer. While the meeting leader rotates each week, our school day always begins with a reading from the Bible and the phrase "Today we celebrate God's word," regardless of who is selected.

The Community Meeting is the only part of each day that the entire student body gathers as one. It is a time when students can turn to fellow Penguins for comfort and hope: Students are given a chance to ask for prayers from the whole community. And thanks to SFdSCS parent Andrew Welch, we have a beautiful repository for these prayers.

Mr. Welch is a gifted carpenter. His skills have been honed over the years—Mr. Welch has been working with wood since he was 12 years old. When Mr. Costante stumbled across a picture of a wooden prayer cross, he immediately knew to call Mr. Welch with his idea. Armed only with the picture from Mr. Costante, Mr. Welch designed and built our prayer cross from oak and glass. From the front, the cross' workmanship is striking, and you'd never guess the elaborate trap doors it features in back. The cross is designed to open from



four such doors so that prayers can easily be "slipped in and retrieved," according to Mr. Welch.

Mr. Welch said that the hardest aspects of the project were the pane of glass and, unsurprisingly, the hinged doors. Now students at Saint Francis are putting those trap doors to good use. It won't be long before the prayer cross is filled, which makes Mr. Welch happy. Of the 20-30 hours he worked on the project, Mr. Welch said, "I enjoyed it because it was for the school."

You can find more of Mr. Welch's handiwork in the cafeteria: he is the man responsible for our trophy case. St. Francis might have another equally talented Welch on its hands—



A DAY IN THE LIFE OF AN ALTAR SERVER

By Caitlyn Paley



During the week, Paige Jansen has the typical responsibilities of an eighth grader: homework, studying, and extracurricular activities. On weekends, Paige has even more responsibility. For the past two years, Paige has been an altar server at St. Francis de Sales. It's a task she takes seriously, and it's one that has shaped her faith.

Altar servers ensure that mass runs smoothly. Throughout the service, servers hold candles, set the altar, and hand liturgical books to the priest. Thanks to altar servers like Paige, you might not even notice these transitions.

For Paige, being an altar server carries a lot of weight. "I love being a part of the procession," she says. "It makes me feel involved and opens my eyes to the Gospel. I see what's going on in the reading." Paige's only regret is that more students don't get a chance to connect with mass the way she does as an altar server. Paige "wish[es] more people would try it because it's actually fun."

She enjoys the closer bond she's formed with the priests and the way that being an altar server has allowed her to get to know them on a deeper level. She cites each priest's sense of humor and kindness. Paige hopes that her classmates will don albs and join in. And she insists that any stage fright quickly disappears because St. Francis is such a supportive community: "If you mess up, it's embarrassing for the moment, but most people don't notice, and the other altar servers have done it, too. Everyone is there to worship."

STUDENTS FLEX MATH MUSCLES ONLINE THANKS TO NEW TEXTBOOKS

By Megan Smith



Go Math! is the new interactive math series that St. Francis de Sales students began using this year. This new series offers students a variety of ways to access curriculum information. In addition to using the textbooks in class, students may access their textbooks online with a computer, tablet, or smartphone. Students can view videos and learn with the "Personal Math Trainer" program. This program offers additional sample problems that incorporate scaffolding techniques if students solve a math problem incorrectly. Students can complete homework online or in their textbooks. The Go Math! textbooks emphasize problem solving and improving students' writing skills in math. This new series will help to prepare Penguins for our ever changing, technologically-driven world.

HAVE YOU VISITED OUR SCHOOL WEBSITE?

Go to www.stfrancisdesales.net and check out all the good things happening at school. Don't forget to visit the Photo Gallery for tons of pictures!

BOOKMARK US!

The Holy Year of Mercy

By Cecelia Rosenfelder

Pope Francis reminds us that we are to be "The Face of Mercy." Here at St. Francis de Sales Catholic School, we are called to show mercy because mercy has first been shown to us. This year we will celebrate the Gospel of Mercy with different events each month. We celebrate the Gospel every morning, too. Part of our Community Meeting is the recitation of the Year of Mercy Prayer. During the month of September, we studied the Parable of the Lost Son. Also, we prayed daily the Prayer of Sorrow and began to learn the song "Loving and Forgiving." For this month's project, the school collected over 900 cans of food for the Joseph House, and the eighth grade built their "canstruction" (canned goods sculpture) in the shape of a cross. The eighth grade also hosted the second annual SFdS & Pinehurst Field Day. Students from the adaptive gym class at Pinehurst Elementary School enjoyed obstacle courses, games, and even a bounce house! Our students reached out to our guests with compassion and love. In addition, the second grade assembled Field Day gift bags and awards that were presented to each participant from Pinehurst so that they had something to bring home from their new friends. In October we studied the Parable of the Good Samaritan, and we crafted prayer lilies featuring kind words that were gifted to patients at our local hospital in the hope of brightening their days. And lastly, the school collected funds for the Eastern Shore Pregnancy Center in support of the sanctity of all life. We're so excited for what the following months will bring as we greet each day in the spirit of mercy!

PENGUIN PICS

Reading and Math Carnival



SFdS and Pinehurst Field Day



Riverside Carnival



2015-2016 STUDENT COUNCIL

By Phyllis Phillips



(Not pictured: Joel Shibu)

Let me introduce to you the Student Council for 2015-2016. Our officers are: Jack Riley, President; Madison Synowiec, Vice President; Stephanie Brilliant, Treasurer; and Claire Bowler, Secretary. The representatives are as follows: 7th Grade — Anna Swierkosz and Grant Wagner, 6th Grade — Taylor Gray and Joel Shibu, and 5th Grade — Caroline Cosgrove and Jack Gardner.

We have a wonderful group of students who are responsible and hard-working. Our first activity was buying and planting the mums in the boxes outside the entrance of school. We wanted our campus to be beautifully colorful for our Middle States visitors. Then, during their visit, some of our officers were guides, giving them tours Tuesday evening, October 6.

On November 11, our student council officers organized and led our Veteran's Day prayer service and recognition program. We have more plans for activities that will demonstrate our leadership qualities. Stay tuned!

SPOTLIGHT DR. JOSE ALVARADO

By Caitlyn Paley



After 12 years of studying and working in Nashville, Tennessee, Dr. Jose Alvarado returned home to the Eastern Shore to practice medicine in 2012. For the past three years, Dr. Alvarado has served the children and families of Salisbury as a pediatrician. He acknowledges that it was a long road from St. Francis—he graduated in 1997—to the Vanderbilt University School of Medicine, but he's passionate about the work he does.

While many doctors say it was always their dream to don a white coat, Dr. Alvarado's career as a doctor is not quite what he envisioned for himself as an undergraduate. Dr. Alvarado earned a degree in engineering at Vanderbilt, then returned to his alma mater for medical school. He advises students interested in medicine that it's all right to forge an unconventional path to medical school. "Study what you like in college. You don't have to be a scientist to become a doctor," he said. "I get to see lots of kids and they ask me for advice. There's a lot of pressure to choose a profession. Figure out what you're good at and what makes you happy, and that will lead you in the right direction," Dr. Alvarado continued.

Dr. Alvarado's wife, Dr. Maria Maguire, underscores his point. Dr. Maguire studied comparative literature as an undergraduate student. The two met in medical school, and Dr. Maguire also became a pediatrician.

Building relationships with patients is one of the aspects of practicing medicine that Dr. Alvarado finds rewarding. So it wasn't a surprise to hear that when Dr. Alvarado thinks about St. Francis, he fondly remembers the commitment of his teachers. "At St. Francis the thing I remember most is that teachers are more like mentors. They're invested in you," he said.

In his free time, Dr. Alvarado enjoys golfing and playing darts, though his already limited free time is set to dwindle further in the next few months. Dr. Alvarado and Dr. Maguire are embarking on their next adventure together: They will welcome their first child in February. "I get to practice what I've been telling parents for the past three years," Dr. Alvarado joked.

The Penguin Nation wishes Dr. Alvarado and his growing family the best during this exciting time!

NEWS FROM THE DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

The Busy Beak is a mission of the Development Committee

The St. Francis de Sales School Development Committee is organized to promote, market, and solicit financial support for St. Francis de Sales School. The funds raised through the efforts of the Development Committee are used to subsidize the operating expenses associated with the school budget in some of the following areas: teacher salaries, improvement of school facilities and the procurement of property. The principal raised is an endowment. The committee, with the approval of the pastor, shall decide how to raise funds and how to spend investment income.

If you would like to help us with these efforts, please send your tax-deductible donation to 500 Camden Avenue, Salisbury, MD 21801. Checks may be made payable to St. Francis de Sales Catholic School with a reference to "Development Fund" included in the memo section.

ALUMNI CORNER

5 Questions with Jeopardy! Contestant Lawrence Dernulc



What year did you graduate from Saint Francis?

I graduated in 1996 (man, that was a long time ago).

How did school prepare you for Jeopardy!?

I guess you could say that all my years of school together helped prepare me for Jeopardy!. I've always had a love for geography and history that started back during my days at St. Francis in Mrs. MacLeod's classes. I won the school geography bee in both the 7th and 8th grade and managed to score high enough to qualify for the state competition both years as well.

What was something surprising about appearing on the show?

The most surprising thing is how quickly it goes by. They film an entire week's worth of shows on one day, so I was able to sit in the audience and watch four episodes get filmed and get a feel for the pace. But until you're on stage, you don't truly appreciate it.

What did you do with your winnings?

Well, unfortunately, because I finished second I only received \$2000, which is nice, but not exactly life altering. I was able to use some of the money to pay for a trip to Chicago to see my beloved Cubs in game three of the NLCS and will be going to Boston in November to see my alma mater's football team, Notre Dame, play Boston College in Fenway Park.

What's your favorite memory of Saint Francis?

It's tough to single out a favorite memory from St. Francis because there were so many. I really enjoyed playing on the soccer and basketball teams, especially basketball, where my Dad was the coach. From an academic perspective, I think everyone remembers the country report and map we had to make in 8th grade for Mrs. MacLeod's class. My country was Japan, and to this day I still want to make a trip there sometime and see some of the landmarks and history I spent so much time learning about!

Lawrence Dernulc attended the University of Notre Dame, where he received a B.S. in Science/Business. He went on to earn an MBA from the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill. He currently lives in West Palm Beach, FL, where he works for an energy company and manages the budgeting and strategy for eight wind energy projects located in Iowa and Minnesota.

Know someone who isn't receiving the Beak? Receiving more than one? Need to change your address? Are you an alumni with some exciting news or updates to share? We want to hear from you! Email us at busybeak@sfdscs.org



Alumni News: Dr. Katie Webb

St. Francis alumna Katie Webb (2002) is completing her first year residency in Warren, Michigan, as an OB/GYN doctor at St. John Providence Hospital. Katie also attended Parkside High School in Salisbury and then attended UMBC for college. In May 2015, Katie graduated from Edward Via College of Osteopathic Medicine in Blacksburg, Virginia. You may know Katie's proud grandmother, Pat Banks, who is a part-time receptionist at the St. Francis rectory. Congratulations, Dr. Webb on your accomplishments!

The Class of 2011 Looks Back (And Forward!) at This Year's SFdSCS Reunion

By Rob Costante

On May 3, 2015 graduates from the SFdS Class of 2011 and their families enjoyed a special reunion which celebrated all that is good about our Catholic school community. Each year, our community has selected a date in early May in which to honor the impending high school graduation of the students who had graduated from our parish school just four years before. This "Alumni Prayer Service and Dinner" event serves as a fitting occasion to reconnect former classmates and their parents who for many had spent nine years of their lives together as members of Penguin Nation.

This year's Class of 2011 celebration dinner began with a prayer service. This faith-filled occasion emphasized to this special group of graduates how as Christians, each of us is called to use our personal gifts to be of service to others. And in referencing this group as special, I don't offer this statement as a mere hyperbole, but rather as an evidence of fact. Evident by the many successes that this class has earned and as well for the true character they have represented in their thoughts, words, and deeds. To this point, graduates from the SFdS Class of 2011 are

attending schools such as Loyola University of Maryland, Notre Dame University, University of Miami, Columbia University, The United States Naval Academy, James Madison, Catholic University, Tufts University and the University of Maryland—just to name a few. What's more, this outstanding group of St. Francis graduates represented their respective high schools as members of the National Honor Society, as Honor Board Representatives, as the Student Government President and elected class officers, as the Class Valedictorian, as Varsity Sport Team Captains, as the Yearbook Editor, and as an Eagle Scout.

In reflecting on the academic, co-curricular and service oriented endeavors of the SFdS Class of 2011, I feel profound pride in having seen the impressive accomplishments that this extraordinary group of young people had earned during their four years in high school. Furthermore, it is events like the annual "Alumni Prayer Service and Dinner" that serve as testimony to the foundational excellence that our St. Francis students have received by graduating from our charming little schoolhouse on Camden Avenue.



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