



St. Mary
Catholic Schools
Grades P3-12

ST. MARY CATHOLIC SCHOOLS NEWSLETTER

St. Mary Catholic Elementary Schools: St. Gabriel • St. Margaret Mary • St. Mary
St. Mary Catholic Middle School • St. Mary Catholic High School

FEBRUARY 2016



A WORTHWHILE INVESTMENT

We believe strongly that the St. Mary Catholic Schools (SMCS) early childhood classes should be every parent's early childhood program of choice. SMCS offers a special community that combines a faith-based experience, solid curriculum and individualized attention, along with wrap-around care and a choice of well-equipped locations and flexible schedule options.

SMCS provides a loving **environment that nurtures each child's faith** daily in the classroom with recognition of each as a unique child of God, as well as participation in all-school prayer services and activities. Our schools offer **dedicated classrooms** that provide space for large-motor activities, music and movement. Preschoolers have access to **age-appropriate amenities** in our outdoor playgrounds, field trips, school libraries, technology centers and gymnasiums. Our **curriculum focuses on kindergarten readiness**, with emphasis on play and sensory-based activities, skill development related to speaking and writing,

and math- and science-related proficiencies such as discovery and hands-on, playful creativity. **Differentiated instruction** is promoted at an early age to meet students' unique needs--social, academic, emotional, spiritual and developmental--in order to best prepare them for their academic future. With a degreed teacher and teacher's aide in every classroom, SMCS educators nurture qualities such as responsibility, teamwork, innovation, kindness, perseverance and independence. Our teachers promote **strong communication between school and home**, with regular newsletters, calendars and email correspondence, as well as parent/teacher conferences twice a year. In addition, safety is carefully attended to, with **securely locked buildings** that allow entrance only by permission and **background checks and child-protection training for all adults who come into contact with our students**. All of these factors together create a sense of belonging, warmth and community that is unparalleled.

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"MY CHILD IS WORTH IT"

According to St. Mary parents Michael and Amy Paine, SMCS has proven to be an "overwhelmingly positive" choice for their family. Citing individual attention, small class sizes, their son's close relationship with his classmates and teachers who work as a team, and a friendly, welcoming community, Amy Paine reflects, "It's a wonderful feeling to know that when your child is there, they are being well taken care of. The amount of growing our child has demonstrated... makes me feel grateful that we chose **St. Mary Elementary.**"



A PLAN FOR OUR FUTURE

During the fall of 2015, The SMCS Board of Trustees and administrative leadership team worked with a professional facilitator to lay the groundwork for a new strategic plan for St. Mary Catholic Schools. Led by SMCS Board of Trustees Chairperson Pam Seidl and SMCS President Helen Englebert, our five school principals, the director of business services, and the three directors from the SMCS advancement team worked together to identify the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats to the school system, completed “homework assignments” focusing on advancing our schools and ultimately came to consensus on this **vision for the future**:

SMCS is acknowledged for its academic excellence and delivery of an exceptional student experience. The system is financially stable (as defined by decreased line of credit, increased revenue and balanced budget) to ensure the long-term stability and continuation of SMCS Catholic education.

To work toward achieving this vision, the group identified five primary initiatives, which are to:

- Advance Catholic education as an investment in developing future Catholics through academic and spiritual leadership
- Develop and implement recruitment and retention strategies that grow enrollment
- Establish a financially stable business model
- Deliver academic excellence; and
- Provide an exceptional student experience.

A board of trustees member was assigned as the champion for each initiative. Stakeholder groups for each were also identified, and a task force will be developed for each initiative from among the stakeholders. Each champion will be responsible for organizing and guiding the task force to develop plans to accomplish the initiative, meet deadlines and provide progress reports to the board. The task force will gather data and/or help develop and implement plans to achieve the goal. General metrics of success were also identified, and determining how to achieve and measure success will also be the responsibility of each task force.

The plan was approved at the SMCS Board of Trustees meeting on January 20, 2016, and the next step will be the formation of the task forces in February. In time for the board meeting on April 20, the task forces are expected to meet, identify metrics and outline plans of action. Thereafter, periodic reports of progress will be expected by the SMCS Board of Trustees.

2015-16 SMCS ANNUAL FUND

Get on board! YOU can help all students experience the pride, tradition and excellence of an SMCS education by supporting the SMCS Annual Fund. Your gift helps to make up the difference between the tuition and third source funding and the actual cost of educating each student. Investing in our schools helps to cover this gap of approximately \$3,000 per student in operating costs.

The Zephyr “passenger list” includes students and teachers at all SMCS schools from early childhood through 12th grade at St. Mary Catholic High School. The SMCS Annual Fund helps to cover the cost of their journey, including textbooks and instructional supplies; technology equipment, licensing fees, internet, software, hardware and supplies; tuition assistance and financial aid; and continuing education for faculty.

Parish subsidies do help to alleviate costs, but funding from Zephyr alumni and current SMCS families and friends is vital to providing a track to the future where our students can expand their knowledge, grow in their faith and learn about the importance of service.

We are at the mid-point of this year’s Annual Fund journey and have achieved 50% of the goal. Please consider a gift to the SMCS Annual Fund today to help us fuel the Zephyr train and help students reach their destinations!



REFINING OUR FINE ARTS

Since the new SMCS Fine Arts Department was formalized in early 2015 with the hiring of Fine Arts Director Christina Turner and FAEC Technical Director Hayden Kraus, great strides have been made in the areas of academic and co-curricular fine arts, and the pair is energized to move forward with further improvements.

Under their supervision, a new microphone system was installed in the fine arts center theater over the summer that greatly enhanced the audio coverage and acoustics in the facility, resulting in noticeably better sound quality in our liturgies, shows, meetings, performances and concerts.

In the classrooms, personnel responsibilities were reorganized for 2015-16 to better capitalize on the strengths of our instructors. One exciting development was the formation of the Grade 7-12 SMCS marching band, which performed in the homecoming parade and the Downtown Appleton Christmas Parade! An online gallery to display and view students' artwork is being developed, and this semester, a for-credit graphic design class and a drama class are being offered at the high school for the first time. Exciting plans are in the works for future additions at all levels.

Programs are also being implemented to develop our **co-curricular fine arts opportunities**. A technical theater master class and an improvisational theater workshop were very well attended, as are the KidStage productions that are held in our FAEC with elementary school students from across the Fox Cities several times each year. The highly regarded SMCS Elementary Enrichment program also continues to offer younger students the opportunity to learn various styles of dance, piano and voice, and work with various visual arts media.

In addition to these "on-stage" successes, there is important progress being made behind the scenes. Turner and Kraus have embraced their roles as resources for the system, caretakers of our fine arts facilities and ambassadors to the community. St. Mary Catholic Schools is proud to be creating a program that is worthy of the fine arts facilities which with we have been blessed.



Fifteen SMCS art students have works on display at the Bergstrom-Mahler Museum now through February 7; nine SMCS students' pieces were chosen for the state exhibit at the state capitol in Madison, February 27 – March 11!

St. Mary Catholic Schools will host the conference solo & ensemble contest at the middle and high schools on Saturday, February 27.

The fine arts fruit sale is taking place now through February 12, with delivery on March 3, and 100% of the proceeds go to the maintenance and improvement of the Jane Bergstrom Fine Arts Education Center.

The middle school presented *Bye Bye Birdie* February 6 & 7, and the high school presents *Footloose!* March 11-13.

www.showtix4u.com



“WHAT’S AWESOME? EVERYTHING!”

By John Dominguez, Physical Education and Health Teacher at St. Mary Catholic Middle School



I was asked to discuss some of the things about the new middle school that I feel are awesome. My reaction is... EVERYTHING! I taught at the old building for 18 years, so I feel that I have a unique perspective as to the differences and improvements.

One of the first things that I noticed, and this may sound strange since it isn't about the actual building, is the attitude of pride that the students have in the building. I have heard from many student-athletes that they love it when other teams come to “their” school and are in awe of the building! In the past, our students were not always proud of their school due to the way that others perceived it. Even though *we* knew that inside the walls we were a great school, not everyone was aware of it.

I feel incredibly blessed to be able to teach my classes in such an amazing environment. I now have the space to do activities without the fear of kids running into each other or a wall, and we can have new experiences that were not possible in the old gym. In season, we can now play two volleyball games at the same time, or the high school can run two JV games. This makes it a shorter night for everyone involved--volunteers, coaches, students, Mr. Bates (high school athletic director) and me. And with all of the travel that the high school athletes have to do, early nights for home games are a blessing.

The green space is a pleasure, and I feel it has greatly added to the way that I am able to teach...we were very fortunate this year to be outside into late October playing games that we were never able to before. Fields and areas to run open new possibilities for our PE program, and having the ability to share equipment and space with the high school is a great advantage. My students ask repeatedly if we are going to play tennis in the spring for class; it is nice to be able to answer...“Yes!”

Things that may seem unimportant, for me are terrific, such as phones in the classrooms and my office, saving me the time of typing out emails or walking outside with my cell phone. And, I didn't think how much of an impact windows would make! Being able to see the outside and having so much natural light in the school...well, there really is no way to describe it. The old building was so dark, and I feel that it sometimes fed into the mood of the students and staff. This is no longer an issue; being able to look outside and see the sun is awesome!

Another aspect that our faculty and students really enjoy is



celebrating Mass with the high school. Being so close, this is not a difficult task. And, our onsite chapel is so beautiful and is the first thing that visitors see as they walk in. What a testimony to what our system stands for!

Hands down, one of the coolest things of all is seeing the awe of people when they walk in. I meet many people from other schools, and all of them have the nicest comments about the school. It brings a sense of pride to this school system. It feels good, and as shallow as it may sound, it feels good to be a cut above the rest!

SMCS WELCOMES NEW DIRECTOR OF ADMISSIONS

St. Mary Catholic Schools is pleased to welcome **Elizabeth (Liz) Uhlenbrauck** to the advancement team as the SMCS Director of Admissions. Uhlenbrauck will work in cooperation with SMCS administrators in all functions related to the recruitment and retention of students in St. Mary Catholic Schools, fostering goodwill and strengthening the branding of SMCS in the community. Uhlenbrauck is replacing Jennifer Miller, who will now focus her efforts entirely in the area of human resources.



Liz Uhlenbrauck has a Business/HR degree from UW-Oshkosh, and began her career in human resources and benefit administration with Bemis Corporation. Liz then started and ran her own successful business, Personal Reflections, for 11 years. Liz and her husband Wade, who is an SMC alumnus, have three children, all of whom attend SMCS schools.

“We are thrilled to have Liz join our advancement team,” stated SMCS President Helen Englebert. “Her strong interpersonal skills will fit well with the emphasis that we at SMCS place on family and community relationships. Prior involvement with our schools has cultivated in Liz a love of a quality Catholic education that will be instrumental in her work at SMCS.”

HIGH SCHOOL ACADEMIC HIGHLIGHTS—FALL 2015

In the fall, it was announced that **twenty students at St. Mary Catholic High School earned AP Scholar Awards** in recognition of their exceptional achievement on AP exams. This honor was bestowed on 24% of the Class of 2015, a percentage higher than any other graduating class in the Fox Cities. The College Board recognizes several levels of achievement based on students' performance. At St. Mary Catholic High School:

- one student earned the National AP Scholar Award
- six students earned the AP Scholar with Distinction Award
- one student earned the AP Scholars with Honor Award
- twelve students earned the AP Scholar Award.

Of this year's award recipients at SMCHS, six are now seniors and have another year to complete college-level work and possibly earn a higher-level AP Scholar Award.

For the eighth time in seven consecutive years (with two winners in 2013), St. Mary Catholic High School has a senior who achieved the designation of **National Merit Scholar** finalist, meaning that she scored in the top .05% of the nearly 1.4 million students who took the test in the fall of their junior year. Her designation as a full National Merit Scholar is expected to be announced in the spring.

THE STATE OF OUR SCHOOLS

For the past 10 years, the leadership of St. Mary Catholic Schools has presented a State of Our Schools address. This year, the presentation will be held in the **multipurpose room at St. Mary Catholic Middle School**. Join SMCS President Helen Englebert, board of trustees chairperson Pam Seidl and our principals to hear highlights of the prior year, details about the strategic planning initiative and the challenges and opportunities we face in the upcoming months. An opportunity ask questions and talk with leadership team members will also be included. Join us on **Tuesday, February 23 at 6:30 p.m. or Monday, February 29 at 4:00 p.m.** for the 2016 SMCS State of Our Schools. To help us plan, please RSVP to mgriffin@smcatholicsschools.org if you plan to attend.



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Learn about SMCS summer activities including day camp, athletic & enrichment camps, for-credit classes and summer theater by clicking on Summer Programs on the main page of our website.



St. Mary Catholic Schools
Grades P3-12

MISSION STATEMENT

St. Mary Catholic Schools, in partnership with family, Church and community, provides a quality Catholic education that is focused on faith, academics, service and personal development from preschool through high school to influence a rapidly changing world.

PARTNERING FOR SUCCESS: EXPANDED PUPIL SERVICES

Students come to school with a variety of academic, personal and social needs that can affect their learning, and their education experience may be impacted by both internal and external challenges. Some students in our schools have disabilities that qualify them for special education services, while others may have issues and challenges that affect their learning but may not meet legal criteria for special education. Both types of students may struggle in school, and as a result, are at risk for a lack of future success. However, students who experience difficulties in basic areas of learning and behavior, regardless of the cause, may thrive with the assistance of a learning support program.

To address the needs of struggling students, St. Mary Catholic Schools has developed a collaborative K-12 pupil services system to offer learning support. At the elementary level, our SMCS Learning Support Team includes learning specialists, a reading teacher and counselor. At the middle and high school we have learning specialists and counselors. While SMCS schools have been providing learning assistance to students for years, the pupil services program establishes a formal K-12 system that addresses the changing needs of individuals over the course of their K-12 academic career. The academic services offerings operate in tandem with the well-established comprehensive counseling program, which provides vocational, college-prep and guidance counseling services to SMCS students.

Through this program, learning specialist professionals work as a team in partnership with teachers, administrators, parents, families and community members to meet the needs of each identified student in the areas of reading/literacy, math, language and behavior. Students do not need a formal disability diagnosis to access support through this program, which addresses significant learning difficulties, mild intellectual disabilities, language disorders or delay and behavior needs. Students with autism spectrum disorders or mental health issues may also be supported through these school-based resources.

The goals of the SMCS Collaborative Pupil Services include increasing academic achievement; helping students become confident, caring, and contributing citizens; and providing comprehensive, coordinated, integrated and customized assistance in a timely manner. SMCS strives to create an environment to achieve these goals, where families, classmates, educators and community members work together as partners to create a supportive and respectful learning environment.

Pupil services professionals use a variety of strategies that fall into one (or more) categories to help students reach their maximum potential. They include assessment, screening, and evaluation; individual and small group counseling; home-school partnership,

classroom instruction; collaboration and partnerships with community-based systems; services for staff; and program and resource development, management, and evaluation.

When a student's needs directly affects their ability to learn, our educational staff, led by the learning support team, works collaboratively to do everything we can to meet the challenge, and help all students to succeed academically, social and emotionally.

SMCS COLLABORATIVE PUPIL SERVICES

The following individuals provide collaborative learning support and guidance services to SMCS students.

Tara Gagne B.S.E., M.S.E., K-8 Learning Specialist
Ann Heinrich, B.S., MA-CCC/SLP, K-5 Learning Consultant
Karen Fahley, B.A., M.S.E., K-5 Reading Specialist
Lisa VanCamp, B.S.E., 9-12 Learning Specialist

Nada Newcomb, B.Mus., B.S., M.S., K-5 Guidance Counselor
Mary Lou Kalas, B.A., M.S.E., 6-8 Guidance Counselor
Jennifer Whiting, B.S., M.S.E., 9-12 Guidance Counselor
Chris Hall, B.A., 9-12 Guidance Assistant

SMCS EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATORS

Among our eight lead teachers, they hold nine bachelor's degrees and two master's degrees; they also have 141 combined years of classroom, 115 of which have been in St. Mary Catholic Schools classrooms!

LEAD TEACHERS

Ann Ellyson, B.S.	Cathy Schlieter, B.S. (2)
Jeanne Griffith, B.A.	Maryann Slavinsky, B.A., M.Ed.
Megan Kelly, B.A.	Nancy Stevenson, B.A., program coordinator
Trish Konezke, B.A.	
Mary Resch, B.S., M.Ed.	

TEACHERS' AIDES

Kim Bittner	Sue Peters
Kerri Calmes	Kelly Roloff
Sue Coenen	Ann Marie Schmitz
Susan Gullick	Karen Schumacher
Peg Mathews	Lorene Willems
Amy Myers	



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In addition to advantages in the environment and overall experience, we offer several extras that allow families to customize their own experience. Although all of our three elementary schools offer the same quality education, each has its own unique character. At SMCS, parents can choose the preschool classroom that best fits their child's personality and needs. Because we recognize that not all four-year olds are ready to be in a classroom setting for five half days, every week, we offer flexible attendance options with prorated fees. For parents with commitments that require them to be away all day, we provide the reassurance of knowing that their children are in one safe location, under the nurturing supervision of caring professionals. Families appreciate our extended day option until 3:00 p.m. with lunch available, as well as enrichment activities (for an additional fee) including karate, dance, Spanish, piano, theater, parent/child yoga and math club. Parents may drop off their students as early as 7:30 a.m., and after-school care is also available until 5:30 p.m. for preschoolers (at the discretion of the building principal).

A child's academic and spiritual foundation influences his or her entire future. St. Mary Catholic Schools is proud to provide a learning environment, right from the very beginning, in which our students can thrive and grow into well-rounded, faith-filled members of our community.



"MY CHILD IS WORTH IT"

Ryan and Jennifer Valentine, whose children attend **St. Gabriel**, have found the teachers and administrator to be very supportive of their family, and they appreciate the small class sizes, flexible teaching styles and warm, personal care for each child. "The greatest part comes down to the teachers and the love and support they give each child," Jennifer Valentine states. "They are amazing and are really open to providing feedback to the parents and giving insight on our kids." The family's experience with extended care and the preschool enrichment offerings has also been very positive: "For those parents that need to have their kids stay at school all day, there is extended care, enrichment and after-school care for the kids. These programs continue the learning, and have the extra focus on fun!"

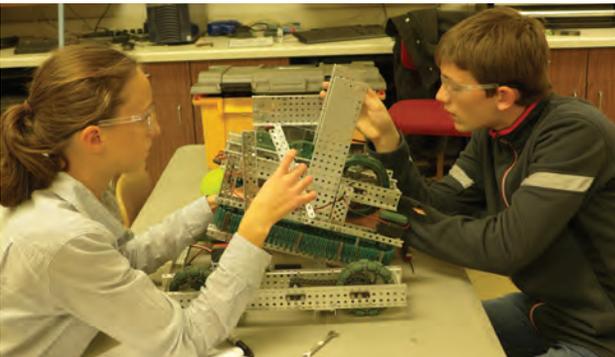


SMCS's Early Childhood Education Teachers

"MY CHILD IS WORTH IT"

Robert and Stephanie Michalkiewicz are pleased with their choice of the **St. Margaret Mary** early education program for their daughters. Stephanie stated, "The school provides a faith-based education with small classes leading to more individual attention and a lot of hands-on activities which make learning more effective and fun. The teachers are always willing to talk to you any time and truly care about your child's education. Parent involvement is always encouraged at St. Margaret Mary, which keeps us connected with the school and what the children are doing and learning. One of my favorite activities is that the kids participate in Move to the Groove (with the whole school)... which encourages movement, exercise and confidence. My daughter comes home excited about it every week!"

For information about our early childhood program, contact SMCS Director of Admissions Liz Uhlenbrauck at 722-7796 ext. 157 or a school principal.



THE "NEW" SMCS STEM CLUB: ROBOTICS AND MORE

ROBOTICS

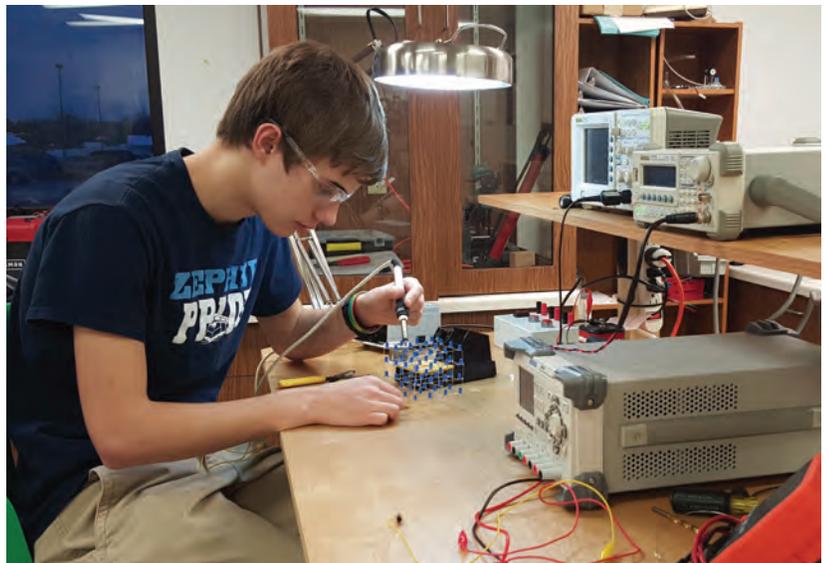
In the fall of 2016, St. Mary Catholic High School, with the assistance of an anonymous donor through the Community Foundation for the Fox Valley Region and Miron Construction Co., Inc., expanded the space used by the SMCS STEM Club in the building located near Zephyr Fields. The expansion better accommodates the growing number of students in the club, and even made room for an eighth grade robotics team and the middle school's FIRST Lego League (FLL) program to work on their projects. The additional space allows those who are working on tasks requiring quiet concentration such as programming and journaling, and those who are working on building and running the robots, to have separate work areas. It also created space for the group to begin expanding into additional areas of interest.

In addition to the middle school's VEX and FLL programs, our SMCS Elementary Enrichment Program offers robotics experiences for younger students through VEX IQ, Club Invention and First Lego League, Jr.

The competition season for the SMCS robotics teams is going very well. At their first-ever competition, the freshman team qualified for the state tournament, and the eighth grade team achieved the Sportsmanship Award. As of press time, six SMCS teams have qualified for the state tournament, and SMCS Team 1200F Z-Ballers is ranked 11th in the world in the robot skills category! At press time, four teams qualify for the national tournament, and following the state tournament in Appleton on February 20, 2016, we anticipate that several SMCS teams will advance to the national tournament on April 7-9, 2016 in Omaha, Nebraska *and* to the world championship April 20-23, 2016 in Louisville, Kentucky.

...AND MORE!

As of the first of the year, the SMC Technology and Engineering Club changed its name to the SMCS STEM Club. This new name, which includes the acronym STEM (science, technology, engineering and math), reflects the wider range of interests and activities among the group's members, and the intention to work toward extending activities to younger students. While robotics will obviously remain a huge part of the club, mentors and members are already beginning workshops in areas such as electronics, electrical engineering and aeronautics. Not a hobby club, these STEM Club activities will include a strong educational component. Watch the summer activity brochures for dates and details for rocketry camps for middle school students.



SMCS WORLD LANGUAGES

This year, the Confucius Classroom program, which teaches about Chinese language and culture through classroom, community and cultural experiences, expanded its unique offerings to more students and community members through St. Mary Catholic Schools, further complementing our strong world languages program.

Beginning in the fall of 2015, the Mandarin language program was restructured to include fourth and fifth grade students, mirroring our current offerings in Spanish. Now, students at one elementary school have Chinese class every day for a semester while the other schools teach Spanish, then they rotate each semester. While at the elementary campuses, the Chinese and Spanish teachers also spend time with the younger students, introducing them to simple vocabulary and interesting aspects of Chinese and Spanish/Hispanic cultures, such as Chinese New Year and the Day of the Dead. This gives students early exposure to two world languages, and by the time they enter middle school it is hoped that students will have had enough experience to either choose a language they would like to continue with, or to pursue German. When those students who are now starting a language in fourth grade reach seventh or eighth grade, they will be able to walk across the parking lot for high-school level instruction in world languages.

At St. Mary Catholic High School, German, Spanish and Mandarin Chinese are offered. Our Chinese teacher instructs Mandarin language and culture classes, and is an ESL (English as second language) liaison, helping our international students to adjust and keep up with their studies. Having a single person oversee both the language instruction and international program at the high school is promoting closer integration between our Chinese

language learners and native speakers, and fostering a stronger exchange of culture and ideas. Teachers of each language engage their students in creative classroom projects and extra activities.

In October, as part of the Confucius Classroom (CC) program,



St. Mary Catholic Schools hosted a three-day Chinese artist-in-residence who performed for all of our K-12 students in a series of concerts and offered many a chance to play her traditional folk instrument. In addition, she visited many classes and answered questions about Chinese culture, and worked with Chinese language and native students to perform an evening concert for the public. Plans for a drop-in celebration of the Chinese New Year will take place at the high school on Monday, February 8 in the IMC.

Also as part of the CC community outreach, in November sixteen community members attended a one-night cooking class where they learned a few Chinese cooking techniques and enjoyed a delicious meal and fellowship. More such classes are planned for second semester with different chefs and cuisines to share the opportunity with those who were on the waiting list and other interested parties.

AFTER THE CLASSROOM

The Mandarin language program at St. Mary Catholic High School began when Emilie Franda and Jace Scheffler, both 2014 graduates, were sophomores. Both took high school Mandarin for three years and tested into second-year college level instruction at UW Oshkosh via a distance learning lab. Franda, who says she struggled in high school with English and Spanish, was attracted to Mandarin because it was so different. She says that she excelled in and loved Chinese, and hopes to use her conversation skills, which she continues to practice, in her future in a medical field. This February, Scheffler and a peer will depart for Zhejiang Province, China, where they will spend a semester at Ningbo University, an international school with about 26,000 undergraduates from around the world. Scheffler will study a full course-load of Mandarin classes focusing on the essentials of speaking, writing, reading, and listening.

TECHNOLOGY TALK

With the SMCS Technology Plan in its second year, many upgrades to equipment and infrastructure have taken place, and the middle school one-to-one program is successfully underway. The physical tools, however, are only as valuable as the way in which they are used. Beyond examples of the ubiquitous use of Google Docs, Edmodo, BrainPop, Go Noodle, TEDed and more, here are just a few ways that our SMCS instructors are using technology to enhance the entire curriculum.

ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

Our elementary school teachers are using a plethora of websites to enhance the curriculum, ranging from resources that provide video demonstrations, virtual field trips, visual models of earth's changes, math activities, review games and quizzes to software to compose, illustrate and publish stories. The elementary teachers also use laptops and mobile devices to provide center activities that can be tailored to individuals. Video capabilities are especially useful with younger students to incorporate music and movement into lesson plans. For example, kindergarten teachers get their students singing and dancing while learning new words by sight, and many teachers use activity-based websites to get students up and moving for "brain breaks."

One example among many programs is Reflex, an online math-fact fluency program that fourth grade students at St. Margaret Mary are using with the assistance of a grant the teacher received. Students are expected to use the math fact site and games to become proficient in the four basic operations. Like most valuable online educational resources, the program provides teacher reports and feedback to students with visual data reports.

MIDDLE SCHOOL

The one-to-one program at the middle school has transformed the way the curriculum is delivered. Most students have adapted to taking notes on their laptops, and also have access to their textbooks, study guides, homework, projects, rubrics and any notes sent out by the instructor, right at their fingertips. Teachers report that since students now complete their homework on their devices, students are doing a better job of getting assignments completed and turned in on time.

Examples of projects that instructors have used software or websites to complete include a virtual car-buying experience to teach fiscal responsibility in math, online dissections in science and the demonstration of various visual arts techniques in art class and performances in music and band. For eighth grade religion, students use the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops' website to keep a journal of Sunday readings over the course of the year, Franciscan Media's site to reflect on the saint of the day, and various resources to learn about Pope Francis's Year of Mercy. In seventh and eighth grade English, students

use Google Docs to share information and ideas while they research for big group projects, speeches, papers and student-led lessons.

HIGH SCHOOL

With the one-to-one program being the norm at St. Mary Catholic High School, teachers and students continue to use their laptops and online resources throughout every school day for classwork, group projects, research, communication and homework. Digital agendas and lesson plans, access to credible resources, file sharing, online homework and multimedia presentations are commonplace and expected.

At St. Mary Catholic High School, the English instructors use online resources extensively. One teacher uses a website called HSTRY to create cause-effect webpages as their final project for Romeo and Juliet. Another uses audio books, as well as online scavenger hunts and interactive lessons to enhance and draw her students in to get them more involved in the readings.

In the sciences, students use technology to research, collect and analyze data for labs, view demonstrations and review material. The chemistry and physics classes use online simulations to look at phenomena that the school doesn't have equipment for or that cannot be done safely at the high school level.

The marketing lab in the technology wing of the high school is busy in the second semester with the new graphic design course in which students will learn to create logos, typography, posters, ads, label design, and convert their drawings into digital files. Spanish students use video editing software to create music videos for a song, requiring that students demonstrate an understanding of the literal meaning (language) and, if applicable, the more subtle meanings (culture) of the piece.



Pray for Vocations

Please keep in your prayers all who are in the process of discernment for religious service, including the following SMCHS alumni:

Alexa Harbor • Matthew Rappl • Sam Schultz

SAVE THE DATE!

SMM Wines Around the World - February 13
SM Winter Escape Dueling Pianos - March 5
smcatholicsschools.org

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In December, SMCS Director of Communications & Confucius Classroom Director Molly Griffin and SMCS President Helen Englebert were privileged to travel to Shanghai and Wuhan City, China, as guests of the Confucius Classroom program and UW-Platteville, to attend an international conference and visit several schools and a college campus, and to report on our Confucius Classroom. They were able to gather valuable insights and resources to help our international languages program thrive.



TRAVEL ENHANCES LANGUAGE LEARNING

The instructors of each of the three world languages offered at St. Mary Catholic Schools—German, Spanish and Mandarin—realize the value of experiencing a native-speaking culture firsthand, so international travel is encouraged. Last year, German students took a two-week trip to Europe where they visited Germany, Austria, Liechtenstein, Switzerland and France and saw large cities, castles, a pilgrimage church, Dachau Concentration Camp and the Swiss Alps. Another trip is being planned for 2017. In summer 2016, Spanish students will travel to the Dominican Republic to experience the culture, language and food of the island, and to engage in environmental service work. In summer 2017, Chinese language students will travel to Beijing, Shanghai and X'iang, China to experience Chinese culture, history, language and food.



FAITH IN OUR SCHOOLS

At the beginning of the current liturgical year, Pope Francis declared a Year of Mercy. Since Lent is a time of reflecting on God's mercy, St. Mary Catholic High School will embark on a school-wide mercy project called **Open the Doors to Mercy**. Students will participate with their mentor groups in this project to compete in a door decorating contest by designing a theme for their classroom door that exemplifies Pope Francis' theme of Mercy. They will also be tasked with researching and sharing information about organizations that perform works of mercy. Ultimately, each mentor group will agree upon one group as the one they would most like to support. The decorated doors will remind us that Mercy needs to be lived worldwide and most certainly in the halls of St. Mary Catholic High School!

The students are currently working on the design and researching their charities. The major "construction" will take place on February 17, and then the Spiritus team will visit SMCHS on the 18th to judge the mercy doors. The winning mentor group's door will win \$500 to be donated to the charity they chose earlier; they will also enjoy a pizza party during the Easter season.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR!



FEBRUARY

- 9 On Track! Recent Changes in Medicaid and Estate Planning
- 13 SMM Wines Around the World: Red & White Night
- 19-22 Winter Break
- 23 & 29 State of Our Schools

MARCH

- 5 St. Mary Winter Escape: Dueling Pianos
- 11-13 SMCHS presents Footloose!
- 15 SMCS Early Childhood Egg-stravaganza
- 18 No School (Staff Development)
- 25-Apr 3 Easter/Spring Break

APRIL

- 5 On Track! 21st Century Parenting – Social Media Awareness
- 19 St. Mary Spring Concert
- 21 St. Margaret Mary Spring Concert
- 22 No School (Staff Development)
- 26 St. Gabriel Spring Concert

MAY

- 2-6 Faculty & Staff Appreciation Week
- 5 Elementary Band Concert
- 7 Zephyrfest 2016: A Black & White Ball
- 10 SMCMS Band & Choir Concert
- 12 SMCHS Band & Choir Concert
- 13 No School (Staff Development)
- 20 No School
- 25 SMCHS Graduation
- 26 St. Gabriel 5th Grade Recognition
- 27 St. Margaret Mary & St Mary 5th Grade Recognitions
- 30 No School (Memorial Day)

JUNE

- 1 8th Grade Recognition
- 2 Last day of school

For information about any of these events, contact our director of communications at mgriffin@smcatholicsschools.org.



PLEASE
RESERVE THE DATE MAY 7, 2016

It's going to be a night to remember at the
2016 Zephyrfest Black & White Ball

Reserve your place today so you can be
part of this magnificent fusion of friends,
education, art and community.

The Zephyrfest Black & White Ball
will be brimming with sparkling sophistication
in true Zephyr style as you take in all of
the raffles and silent and live auctions.

FORMAL INVITATION TO FOLLOW

We appreciate the support of our SMCS parishes
St. Gabriel • St. Margaret Mary • St. Mary/St. John • St. Patrick's

and the parishes that support SMCHS
Holy Spirit • St. Peter and Paul • St. Mary-Greenville • St. John-Sacred Heart



St. Mary Catholic Schools
Grades P3-12

St. Gabriel
Principal Jeanine Leege
900 Geiger Street
Neenah 54956
920-725-4161

St. Mary
Principal Jill Ahles
540 Second Street
Menasha 54952
920-725-5351

St. Mary Catholic High School
Principal Patrick Batey
1050 Zephyr Drive
Neenah 54956
920-722-7796

St. Margaret Mary
Principal Eleanor Healy
610 Division Street
Neenah 54956
920-729-4565

St. Mary Catholic Middle School
Principal Mike Zuleger
1000 Zephyr Drive
Neenah 54956
920-727-0279

SMCS Business Office
1050 Zephyr Drive
Neenah 54956
920-722-7796
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