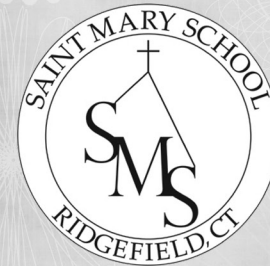


ST. MARY SCHOOL  
183 HIGH RIDGE AVENUE  
RIDGEFIELD, CT 06877

CATHOLIC SCHOOLS FAIRFIELD COUNTY



## SAINT MARY ALUMNI NEWSLETTER



A MESSAGE FROM  
**DR. DAMES**  
SUPERINTENDENT OF  
CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

It is with great excitement that I write to you in this first alumni newsletter! The Catholic Alumni Project is off to a wonderful start and we have been so pleased to hear from so many alumni. Many of our former students responded to our initial mailings and have written to us describing memorable experiences, favorite teachers, influential religious and priests and lifelong friendships that were forged at the elementary school level. We cherish each and every warm response and look forward to more! Many of you shared more than memories and were kind enough to include generous donations to help your former alma mater continue the important work of teaching our students in a faith filled environment. We are deeply grateful for your kindness.

All of you have your own special, unique memories but we also share a common thread. We share the experience of Catholic elementary school; challenging academics combined with the discipline and moral direction which guides us even today in our daily choices and actions. We also share a sense of community. We, as Catholic school alumni, share a very special bond that unites us in our faith. Today, our schools provide the same safe, caring community that you experienced. We are so proud to continue this wonderful legacy of Catholic elementary schools. So I invite you to read more about your former school in this newsletter.

*Margaret A. Dames Ed.D.*

## SCHOOL NEWS

Bishop William E. Lori awarded the St. Thomas Aquinas medal at the annual Breakfast of Champions on January 27, 2010 to Andrew Ostrosky, Saint Mary School in Ridgefield. An eighth grader, Andrew Ostrosky was recognized for academic excellence and living a life that exemplifies the Catholic faith through service to others. 42 medals were awarded to students from the 39 Catholic schools throughout Fairfield County. Bishop Lori congratulated the students on their achievements, noting "We are very proud of these students who have already achieved so much. We are even more encouraged by their life of faith and virtue. They are a great example to their peers and to us all." Over 11,000 students attend a Catholic school in Fairfield County.



*Educating the mind, feeding the soul.*

### A BRIGHTER FUTURE STARTS TODAY!

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Offering preschool through grade eight, Saint Mary School is a vibrant community, educating the whole child, mind, body and spirit. As promised, our issues continue to feature profiles of our talented staff! In the future we also look forward to featuring you—our alumni! Please email us at [kingp@diobptedu.org](mailto:kingp@diobptedu.org) if you are interested in being profiled. Your fellow graduates would love to know what you are up to!



## ANONYMOUS DONOR HONORS SAINT MARY SCHOOL

Just before Christmas, Living Water International contacted Saint Mary School with the news of an anonymous donor giving funds in honor of Principal Edward Brennan and Monsignor Laurence Bronkiewicz. These funds will be used to purchase a much needed well pump for a village in Kenya. This new pump brought back clean water to a community that once had to walk four kilometers to the nearest pond. What a truly generous and faith-filled gift! The anonymous donor included the following note: "Throughout this Advent Season we remain brothers in Christ."



## CHRISTMAS AT SAINT MARY SCHOOL

Christmas was celebrated throughout Saint Mary School with students and staff attending a Benediction service that was beautifully led by our eighth grade students. Saint Mary School also held the annual Christmas Pageant and Concert. Coordinated by music teacher Mr. Daniel Fox, the kindergarten through eighth grade performed at Saint Mary School to a gymnasium filled with teachers, parents, siblings, grandparents, and clergy. Our holiday spirit continued into the classrooms, where parties were held on December 22nd.

## SAINT MARY SCHOOL PROFILES ASSISTANT PRINCIPALS, ANNA O'ROURKE AND ELIZABETH MANNO

Anna O'Rourke is a gifted teacher and school administrator who has dedicated the past 14 years to Saint Mary School. Her experience includes teaching positions in preschool, third grade, and since 2004, our full-day kindergarten class. In 2004-2005, Mrs. O'Rourke was honored to be inducted into the "Who's Who Among America's Teachers", a nomination shared by the top educators in the United States. In addition, Mrs. O'Rourke has served as the elementary (K-5) Assistant Principal for Saint Mary School since 2004. She holds a Bachelor of Science degree from Central Connecticut State University, a Masters of Arts Degree in Education from Sacred Heart University, and is currently working on an Administrator and Leadership degree. Mrs. O'Rourke has been involved

in curriculum development, is a member of the Saint Mary School Literacy Team, and has spear-headed countless community service initiatives. Anna O'Rourke says she is guided each day by the words of Carter Bayton, "You have to reach the heart before you reach the head." A resident of Ridgefield for the last 18 years, Elizabeth Manno joined the staff of Saint Mary School in 2004 and has been instrumental in the development and implementation of a state-of-the-art Spanish curriculum for students in kindergarten through the eighth grade. Mrs. Manno received her Bachelor of Arts Degree in Spanish from Fordham University and holds a Master of Science in Education from Iona College. Her previous teaching

positions range from the preschool level through high school. Since 2007, Elizabeth Manno has also served as the Middle School Assistant Principal (for grades 6-8). "Students at Saint Mary middle school receive a broad-based, challenging academic curriculum that prepares them to successfully meet the challenges of high school and beyond", stated Mrs. Manno. "Our students are technologically competent and are problem solvers. Most importantly, their education is grounded in faith, as a loving heart is the true foundation of all knowledge." In addition, Elizabeth Manno was a board member for the National Charity League, a CCD teacher, and Girl Scout Leader. Her expertise and dedication represent the essence of the mission of Saint Mary School.

## JULIUS LA ROSA VISITS SAINT MARY SCHOOL

Singer, radio personality and Emmy-nominated actor Julius La Rosa, with grandson and seventh grade student Terry Smith (left) and first grader, Thomas Volgende (right), at Saint Mary School. Mr. La Rosa read the children's book, The Big Bell and the Little Bell to students on November 20. Originally a song Mr. La Rosa recorded and made famous in 1954, "The Big Bell and the Little Bell" was developed into a book and published in 2007.



## SAINT MARY SCHOOL HONORS VETERANS

On November 9th, Saint Mary School students in kindergarten through eighth grade gathered to honor America's veterans. The entire student body took part in the ceremony, presenting their thanks to all the men and women who have served our country. The afternoon included honoring Veterans Day with poems written by students and singing patriotic songs, with each grade taking part in the event. Saint Mary School was privileged to have veterans Robert Tulipani, Richard Howard, and George Schuster attend and speak at the ceremony. Pictured: George Schuster, Victoria Rio, Andrew Ostrosky, Cara Capilli, Robert Tulipani, and Richard Howard.



## NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC GEOGRAPHY BEE AT SAINT MARY SCHOOL

Saint Mary School recently competed in the National Geographic Geography Bee. We wish to congratulate all participants including finalists Terry Smith and Tatiana Pisoni. Congratulations to first place winner Ciaran Kager, a seventh grade student; Ciaran will go on to compete nationally. Pictured with Social Studies teacher Donna Montalto, Ciaran Kager, Terry Smith, and Tatiana Pisoni.

