

HORIzONS

in Blue and Gold

St. Joseph School

2008 ALUMNI REUNION
Celebrating
the Decades:
1930s - 1990s!

Horizons in Blue and Gold

A P U B L I C A T I O N O F
St. Joseph School
Roman Catholic Diocese
of Brooklyn

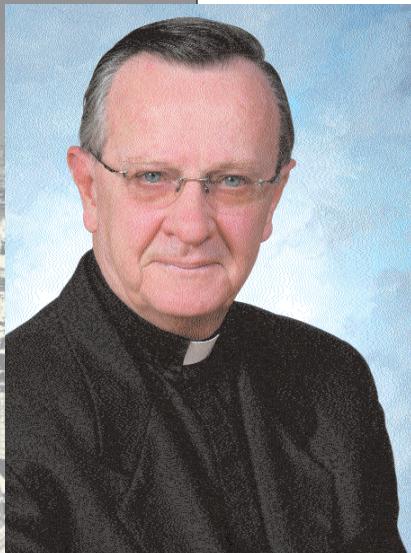
Spring/Summer Issue 2010
Volume 3/Number 1



M A R C H 2 0 1 0

A Message from

O u r P a s t o r



Dear Friends of St. Joseph School,

As I write these few lines to you, we are with the universal Church in the third week of our Lent — a sacred time for a change of mind, or if you will, a conversion of heart in order to celebrate the central and pivotal feast of our faith — the Resurrection of our Lord. We are grateful that the school children are actively learning about this sacred season in their religion classes and through religious experiences like the Living Stations performed each Wednesday morning during Lent.

This morning I went out to get the papers and some rolls. Passing the convent garden, I noticed that though it was only about two weeks ago since our snow storm, the crocuses have pushed their heads through the soil as they are wont to do each year.

May this time of grace see in the hearts of all of us the crocuses of peace, fidelity, and goodness.

In Our Lord,


FATHER JOHN HARRINGTON
Pastor

“... we are with the universal Church in the third week of our Lent — a sacred time for a change of mind, or if you will, a conversion of heart in order to celebrate the central and pivotal feast of our faith — the Resurrection of our Lord.”

A Message from

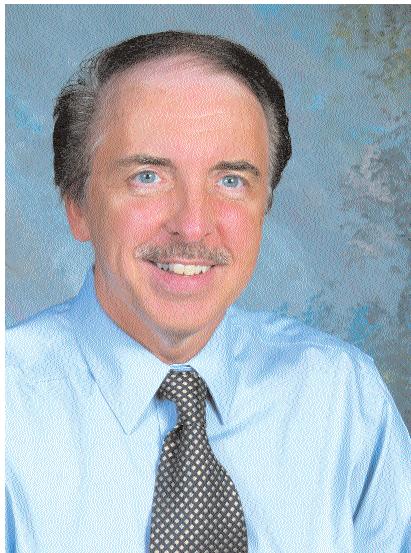
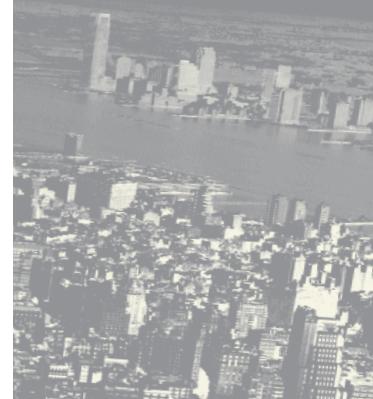
Our Principal

Dear Friends,

I am pleased to be in contact with you again through another issue of our school magazine, *Horizons in Blue and Gold*. Among the unique and invigorating aspects of being in education is the reality that there are always exciting and new experiences in any school year. I'm grateful to have the vehicle of this magazine to share many of those experiences with you.

In this issue, we are happy to report about the following programs and activities:

- ▼ *Preserving the Vision* — the diocese's strategic planning process to preserve viable Catholic elementary education for the future;
- ▼ The *Catholic Alumni Partnership* — a privately funded initiative to re-connect Catholic elementary schools with their alums
- ▼ *Renewing the Vision* — the strategic planning document outlining the efforts of St. Joseph School to maintain its accreditation in the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools
- ▼ Alumni News and Reunions — including plans for our next gathering on Saturday evening, April 24, 2010
- ▼ School News — including our efforts to upgrade technology resources to meet the demands of 21st century teaching and learning.



Those of us, administrators, faculty and staff, who are the current custodians of the rich traditions of St. Joseph School are grateful you, our parent and alumni/ae communities, for your support. The financial sacrifices that you make through the contributions to our annual fund or through your tuition support enable us to continue to provide the students with a Catholic education at approximately one-third the cost per student in the public sector.

We deeply appreciate those sacrifices that enable the children to receive the gift of a Catholic education at St. Joseph School.

Sincerely,

Luke Nawrocki
LUKE NAWROCKI
Principal

"Among the unique and invigorating aspects of being in education is the reality that there are always exciting and new experiences in any school year."

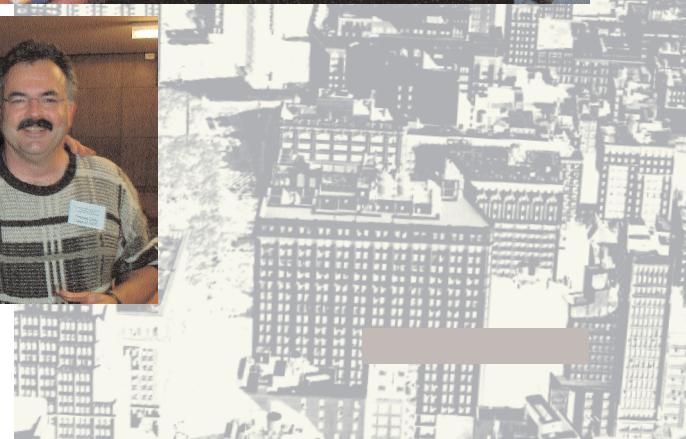
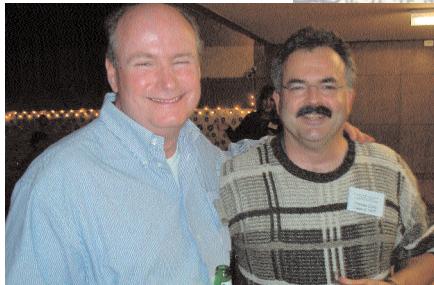


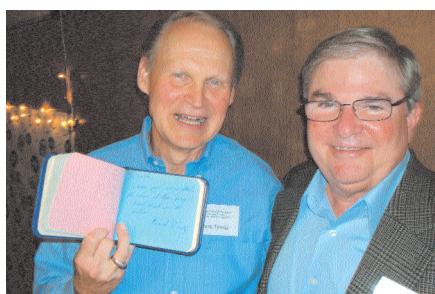
Celebrating the Decades

1930s through the 1990s

On November 8, 2008, St. Joseph held a reunion of all alums from the 1930s through the 1990s. Close to 150 graduates were in attendance enjoying a hot buffet dinner and dancing, many laughs, and fond memories of their experiences together at St. Joseph. Some brought memorabilia that included the school ring, diploma, and autograph book — popular before the adoption of school yearbooks in elementary school. Some of the staff members from years ago who were on hand to join in the festivities included: Father Vella, Barbara Brendel, Karen Pender, John Barry, Grace Kuther, Sister Katherine Thornton, O.P., and Sister Marie Flaherty, O.P.

Celebrating the Decades II has been planned for Saturday, April 24, 2010 at the school. We are all looking forward to another spirited evening.





Strategic Planning to

S e c u r e a B r i g h t F u t u r e

In the fall of 2008, in accordance with the directives of Bishop Di Marzio that all Catholic elementary schools begin a strategic planning process, Bishop Caggiano announced a diocesan-wide initiative entitled, *Preserving the Vision*, to help insure the future viability and vitality of Catholic education in the diocese.

For more than a year, from June 2008 through August 2009, our school community participated in a comprehensive study of all aspects of our school to establish strategic goals and develop action plans to achieve them over the next three to five years. Since the planning document is well over 120 pages in length, its salient features in summary form are being highlighted in this issue of *Horizons*.

With input from students, teachers, administration, faculty, the school's advisory commission, and parents, the school established five strategic goals for implementation over the next three to five years.

Our first goal — a Catholic identity goal — is designed to foster a greater evangelization of our school families. It is our aim that St. Joseph students will demonstrate an increase of appreciative spiritual knowledge of their faith through prayer, worship, Christian service and daily actions. This will be displayed by an increased participation in liturgy, daily prayer, and prayer services. It will also be exhibited through the engagement in specific outreach activities towards the world community. Our action plans include a revival of Catholic traditions, such as the rosary and Stations of the Cross; a study of the saints as role models, particularly the Dominican saints; and placing an emphasis on the liturgy and encouraging family worship through monthly grade level Sunday liturgies followed by breakfast in the school cafeteria.

Our next two goals are internal program goals: the first, to further strengthen the thinking and operational skills of our students in mathematics; the second, to improve the social skills of our students.

Regarding instruction in mathematics, grade level school-wide activities will include such exercises as measuring your smile, calculating monthly rainfall amounts, analyzing growth in individual's height over time, and various measurement activities across the curriculum in science, religion, ELA and social studies. In addition, students will solve holiday and seasonal word problems. As a culminating activity, the school will sponsor a Math Fair in late May.

Regarding social development, we have established a buddy program which pairs children from different grade levels to learn responsibility, cooperation, and mutual respect. It is our hope that children will develop improved interpersonal relations with their peers through their involvement in character building activities, and they will demonstrate social awareness and responsibility through charitable acts of kindness. The buddy activities have included attending liturgy together, the older children reading to the younger children, and activities that involve sharing time making cookies and singing carols at Christmas, coloring eggs at Easter, and working together on many of the mathematics exercises.

The final two goals are aimed at the advancement of the school. In the first case, the school is affirming its commitment to keep current with advances in educational technology by equipping the remaining instructional areas with SMARTBoard technology. Over the last several years, this revolutionary technology has been placed in eighteen instructional areas — classes kindergarten through eighth grade. Over the next three years, we will be adding twelve SMARTBoards in the following areas: library, computer rooms, special subject classrooms, and the

It is our hope that children will develop improved interpersonal relations with their peers through their involvement in character building activities, and they will demonstrate social awareness and responsibility through charitable acts of kindness.

early childhood rooms. In conjunction with this goal, the school will reach out to the alumni community for financial assistance.

Our fifth goal is to increase enrollment, targeting primarily the early childhood programs and the primary grades. Our expectation is to increase enrollment by 2.5% each year for an increase of 45 students over 2008/9 baseline enrollment (491) students by school year 2011-2012. In conjunction with this goal, the school will be increasing marketing efforts.

We view strategic planning as a dynamic process requiring annual evaluation. To this end, each year the school will examine its progress towards the implementation of these five goals and make adjustments as necessary.

We are grateful for the involvement and support of so many people in our planning efforts and remain encouraged by all measures that St. Joseph is alive and well in Long Island City and will remain so for many generations yet to come.

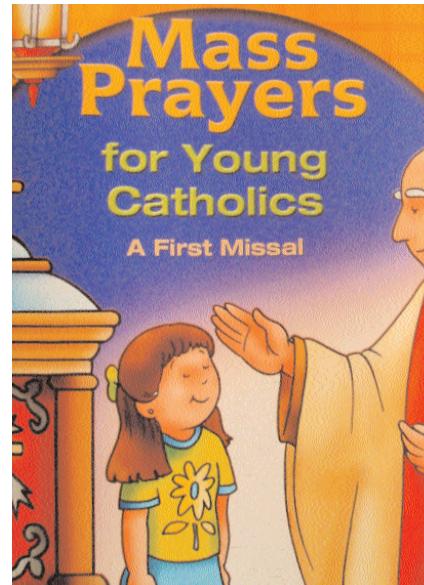
Goal Two: Sample manipulatives used in math classes.



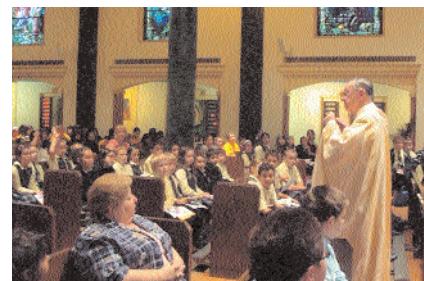
Goal Two:
Samples of student
math projects.



Goal One:
Children's missal used for school liturgies.



Goal One:
Banner prepared
by seventh graders
as part of family
liturgy celebration.

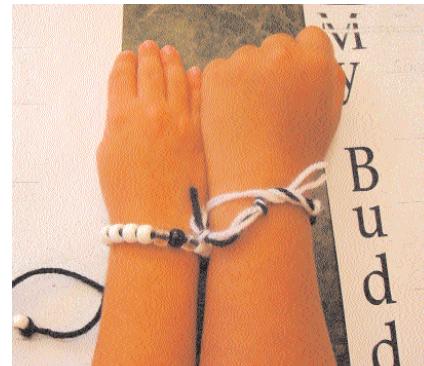


Goal One:
Father Harrington offering
his homily at a school liturgy.

Goal Three:
Buddies decorating Christmas cookies.



Goal Three:
Buddies making
Halloween decorations.



Goal Three:
Buddy bracelets.

Why Study Latin?

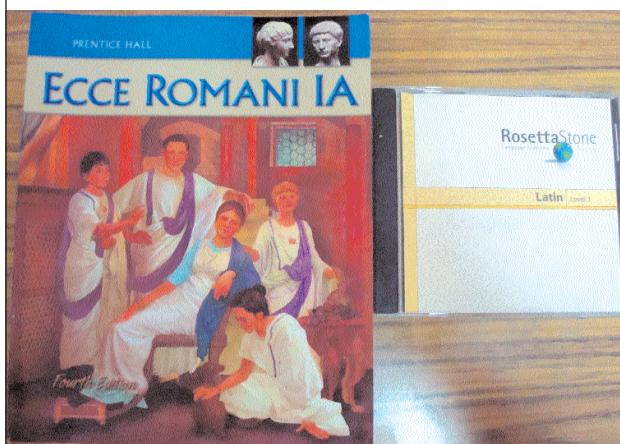
Last year, St. Joseph introduced the study of Latin to all of the students in junior high. Once a staple in all high school programs, Latin began to lose favor in the 1960s to the more popular world languages like Spanish, Italian, and French. However, Latin is making a comeback, and is considered by many to be a more practical choice of a world language, particularly on the elementary level.

A *New York Times* article (November 2008) entitled, "A Dead Language That's Very Much Alive," details many of the benefits to young children from the study of Latin. According to Adam Blistein of the University of Pennsylvania, among Latin's many benefits is that "it builds vocabulary and grammar for higher SAT scores and appeals to school admissions officers as a sign of critical thinking skills and fosters true intellectual passion." Marty Abbott, of the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages, believes Latin will replace German as the third most popular language taught in schools across America.

For those who think of Latin as a dead language not worthy of study in the 21st century, the truth is just the opposite. The facts are that the study of Latin will greatly re-enforce English language skills and serve as a strong foundation for the study of other global languages, such as Spanish or Italian, once children are in high school.

Therefore, we chose to introduce Latin at St. Joseph School instead of the commonly studied languages like Spanish, Italian, French and German because we've concluded that Latin provides the most benefit to a child's education at the junior-high level.

Learning Latin strengthens basic skills in vocabulary and reading comprehension. It focuses on grammar which leads to improved English writing and communication. It increases cultural awareness, makes cultural connections and encourages critical thinking. Latin study introduces students to a rich source of mythology, literature, and history, and Latin presents material that is required in the state educational standards for the study of English language arts and social studies.



In addition to their text, *Ecce Romani IA*, students use the Rosetta Stone computer software program to enhance their learning.

Studying Latin will introduce students to the word roots, prefixes, and suffixes that constitute nearly sixty percent of all English words and ninety percent of those two or more syllables in length. Students will more easily grasp terms they learn in geography, biology, astronomy, math, civics and social studies, and evidence has shown improvement in student reading scores on standardized tests. Hundreds of Latin words are still commonly used in speaking and writing English today.

For those who think of Latin as a dead language not worthy of study in the 21st century, the truth is just the opposite.

Alumni Spotlight:

Joseph D'Angelo '85

Joseph D'Angelo is a distinguished alum from the Class of 1985. Joe received the Walter Boarderman Scholarship to Monsignor McClancy High School, and went on to graduate from Queens College with a BS in Accounting. Joe still lives in Astoria with his wife Lourdes and their three girls, Maria, Melissa, and Elizabeth, all currently attending St. Joseph School.

Always industrious and self-reliant, Joe worked summers to help pay for his education. During his years at Queens College, he worked full time for Pan American Airlines. After graduation, he began working at BDO Seidman, LLP, an accounting firm in New York City. Since 1995, he has worked for U.S. Trust Company/Bank of America where he is Senior Vice-President of Personal Tax Solutions.

Joe accepted the invitation to join the St. Joseph Advisory Commission for Institutional Advancement in 2005 and has been a trusted advisor and supporter of the school's mission and programs. As a CPA, Joe's financial expertise has been an invaluable asset to the school administration.

We asked Joe to answer a few questions about his St. Joseph School experience:

What are your strongest recollections

about your education at St. Joseph?

"St. Joseph School not only provided me an exceptional education which created a smooth transition into high school, it also provided me with a sense of discipline and goal oriented thinking. Failure was not a word in any of our teachers' vocabulary. I always felt comfortable that if I or my fellow students did not quite understand a certain topic, our concerns were not brushed aside and our teachers took the extra time to ensure we understood the material prior to moving on. A strong discipline and foundation in the early grades allowed a student to accept future challenges and tackle them head on."

"Failure was not a word in any of our teachers' vocabulary."

Why have you sent your children to SJS?

"A Catholic education was provided to me, at great cost to my parents, who sacrificed a great deal of their lives working several jobs to ensure my brother and I had the opportunity to attend St. Joseph School. I was brought up to believe if you are given the ability to offer your children the opportunity to enrich their lives with a Catholic education, you make the necessary adjustments in your life to reach that goal. I was fortunate to experience the warmth, care and knowledge of many great teachers throughout my eight years at St. Joseph's School and some of those same teachers have blessed my children as well. If teachers are passionate about their work, the students absorb the material and feed off the positive attitudes provided each day. The teachers balance caring and discipline to create an optimal learning environment."

What are you most satisfied about that decision?

"My wife and I enjoy seeing our children happy each morning as we prepare to bring them to school. Seeing Ms. Fiscina and Mr. Nawrocki each morning allows my wife and I to go off to work knowing that our children are not only receiving a superior Catholic education; they are at their second home."

In addition to the strong academic program, the school offers several programs that benefit our family from a logistical point of view. Work days only seem to get longer and the early morning and late afternoon extended day programs are vital to us as a family. The extended day program offers our children the opportunity to complete their homework in a structured



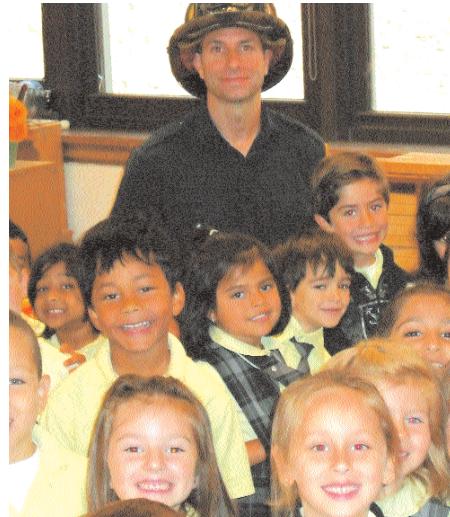
continued on page 8

Community in Action Program

In October, our kindergarten students were treated to a special visit as part of their Community in Action Program. Each year, representatives from various community and service agencies visit St. Joseph to help the youngsters learn about how a community works and cares for each of its members. This year, firefighter Salvatore Hili, graduate from the Class of 1983, now a resident of Whitestone, shared many of his work experiences with the children. Before leaving that day, Sal took some time to write this message for our alumni magazine:

"When Mrs. Larsen asked me if I would come and talk with her class on the topic of fire safety during Fire Prevention Week, I was very excited. Being a New York City firefighter for fifteen years, I've given many lectures to children both in the classroom and at the firehouse. But coming back to St. Joseph is like coming home for me. I am an alum of St. Joseph School — the Class of 1983. I attended from 1974 through 1983 and have many fond memories of St. Joe's and am proud to have attended such a great school. St. Joseph will always hold a very special place in my heart."

— FIREFIGHTER SALVATORE HILI
SACH84@msn.com



Alumni Spotlight

atmosphere supported by the same teachers who have taught them in the past. These programs also allow our children to interact with other children at different ages."

What are your thoughts about your membership on the school's advisory commission?

"It was an honor to be asked to participate on the Advisory Commission. Based upon my past work experiences, I knew I had a great deal to offer the commission; however, I have been the one educated throughout this experience.

Mr. Nawrocki and Ms. Fiscina, along with other members of the commission, have our children's best interests at heart. They work their normal 'hectic' hours each day and they find time to meet with the advisory

commission regularly to discuss issues that currently affect our children as well as potential issues down the road. Current financial and demographic conditions play an important role in the continuance of Catholic education as a whole. This commission has the foresight to take on changes and challenges in a proactive manner instead of a reactive one.

Any closing thoughts?

"I take great pride in seeing other parents, with whom I attended St. Joseph School, send their children to this great institution. This action speaks louder than words!"

continued from page 7

A l u m n i C o n t r i b u t i o n s

H e l p i n g t o S u p p o r t S t. J o s e p h



We are grateful to the sixty-six alums that made a contribution to our 2009 Annual Fund Appeal. As a result of the Catholic Alumni Partnership, we were able to re-connect with many more alums and also acknowledge the contributions we received this year from thirty-five of those newly connected alums. The total contribution as of early March is fourteen thousand dollars.

ALUMNI DONORS TO THE 2009 ANNUAL FUND APPEAL

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What Is SMARTBoard Technology

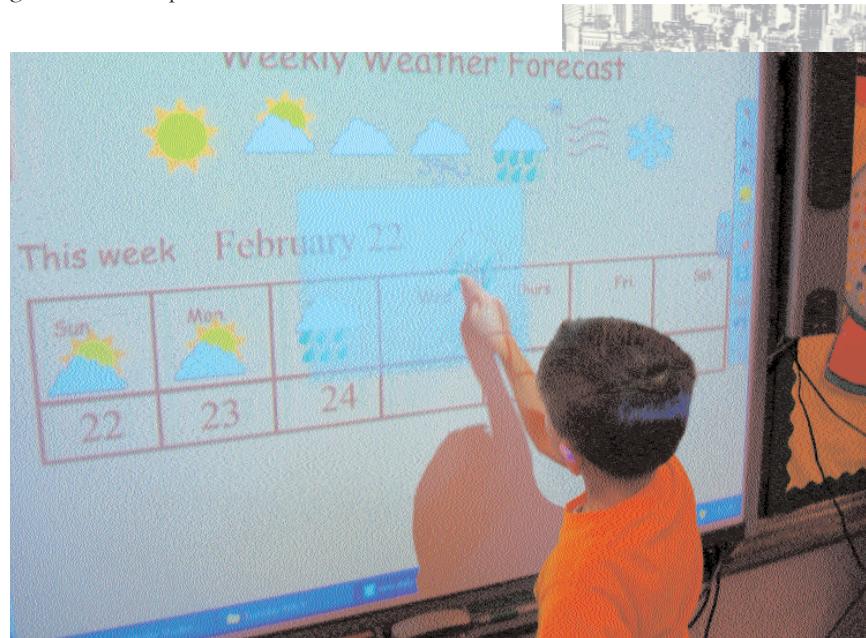
and How Does It Benefit My Child?

The SMARTBoard has revolutionized education in the 21st century. Basically, the SMARTBoard is able to act in the same way as a personal computer with the advantage of involving an entire class of children at the same time. It can access the Internet and uses hundreds of different software programs, web sites, and data bases to supplement the knowledge and skills presented in any textbook.

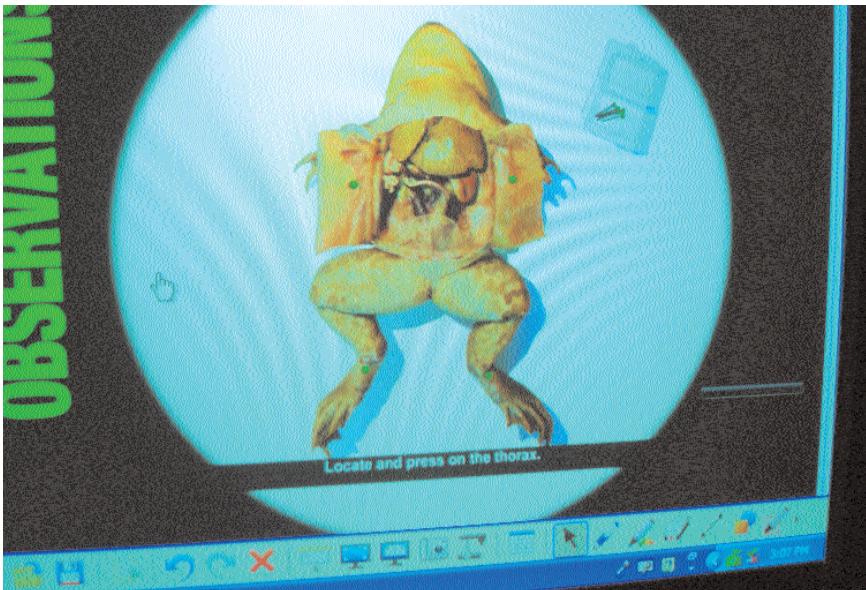
Additionally, the SMARTBoard is interactive, allowing the children to participate more fully in each lesson. The great benefits to children are that it makes education more interesting, and it makes education more accessible to every child by addressing the different learning styles of children. It supplies the visual and auditory stimulation and engages the students in ways that the traditional classroom cannot provide.

St. Joseph School is **one of a handful of elementary schools** in the diocese that has this technology in place throughout the school's educational program — **in every classroom from kindergarten through eighth grade!** Over the next two years, our strategic plan calls for the addition of SMARTBoards in the computer labs, the library, the art, music and science rooms, and in the early childhood classrooms.

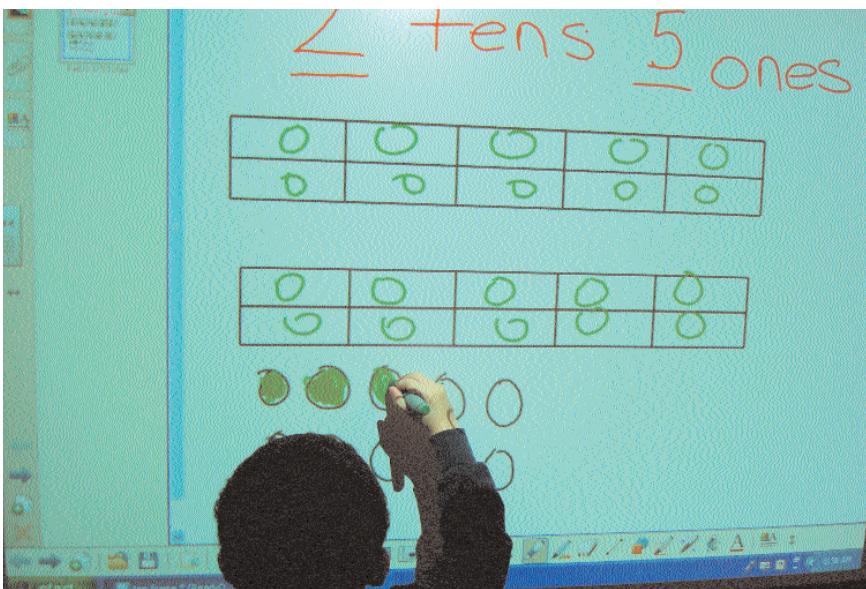
Ms. Riggins, fifth and sixth grade math teacher, offers the following reaction to the value of the SMARTBoard technology: "Children who in the past appeared bored and confused in math class are now excited and participating in math activities. Their grades have improved as well."



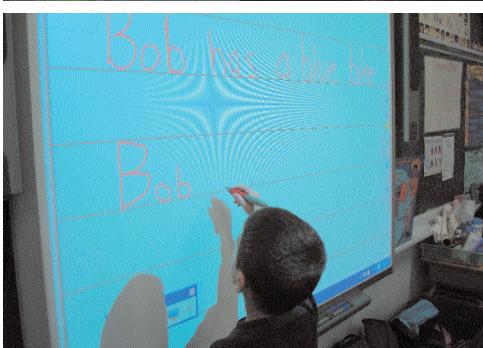
As part of their morning routine, Kindergarten students discuss the day's weather forecast.



Junior high students watch a virtual frog dissection to prepare for the real experience in science lab.



First graders studying place value in math.



First graders practicing sentence structure.

... the SMARTBoard is interactive, allowing the children to participate more fully in each lesson. The great benefits to children are that it makes education more interesting, and it makes education more accessible to every child by addressing the different learning styles of children.



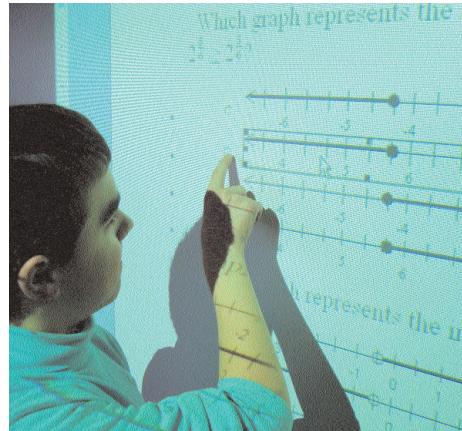
Eighth Graders Take

High School Mathematics

Based on class performance in mathematics in seventh grade in conjunction with TERRA NOVA standardized testing and NYS testing in mathematics, eligible seventh graders are invited each year to study Mathematics 9 in eighth grade.

This high school course is offered in addition to the regular math course required of all eighth graders. The course meets outside of the regular school day, at 7:15 a.m. on Wednesdays and Fridays and after school on Tuesdays and Thursdays.

The twelve eighth graders currently enrolled will be taking the NYS Integrated Algebra Regents Examination in June 2010. Students taking Math 9 benefit from the development of higher order thinking skills as well as an appreciation of the rigors of the high school curriculum. In addition, high schools generally give high school credit to incoming freshmen who score high enough on the Integrated Algebra Regents.



Christopher Kuzemka demonstrates his knowledge of Math 9 at the SMARTBoard.

Congratulations to SJS Alums



Members of St. Joseph School Class of 2005 accepted in the Ivy Leagues and other major colleges:
Danielle Amodeo, *Harvard University* • Keith Calix, *Stanford University* • Cynthia D'Andrea,
Georgetown University • Ante Kendes, *Cornell University* • Linda Sewnarine, *Yale University*

CONGRATULATIONS TO 2005 GRADUATES:
Robert Kunicki, *Valedictorian* — 2009, St. John's Preparatory
Jonathan Ricardo, *Salutatorian* — 2009, McClancy

Scholarship Announcements / Class of 2010

At this writing, the Class of 2010 has received seventeen scholarship offers from schools listed as follows: St. Agnes Academic High School, St. John's Preparatory High School, St. Francis Preparatory High School, Monsignor McClancy Memorial High School, The Mary Louis Academy, St. Mary's High School, and St. Vincent Ferrer High School.

One of our eighth graders was named a finalist to Regis High School and members have received acceptances to the following specialized public high schools: Bronx Science, Brooklyn Latin, LaGuardia High School for the Arts, and Brooklyn Technical High School.

Closing Remarks from

O u r P r i n c i p a l

Dear Alumna and Alumnus,

Before we close the pages of another issue of *Horizons*, I'd like to ask for your assistance to help keep St. Joseph School a vital and viable Catholic elementary school in the diocese.

Most importantly, I ask for your continued support — first, by your prayers that God will continue to bless the St. Joseph School Community for years to come — and second, by any contribution that you can afford to give. Graduates of the sixties and before were fortunate in that their parents paid little or no tuition because of the sacrifices of the Sisters of St. Dominic and lay colleagues who contributed their services to the educational mission of the parish. Today, Catholic education to be strong must continue to rely on the sacrifices of people who wish to give it as a gift to young children.

Our parents make the financial sacrifice of tuition and our teachers work at a lower salary than their public school counterparts because of our teachers' dedication to the mission of Catholic education at St. Joseph. In short, to continue our great mission — we need your help. Your gift — whether to the Helen McLees Scholarship Fund, or to defray the cost of improvements in technology, or to our annual appeal — will assist future generations of children to benefit as you did from a St. Joseph School education.

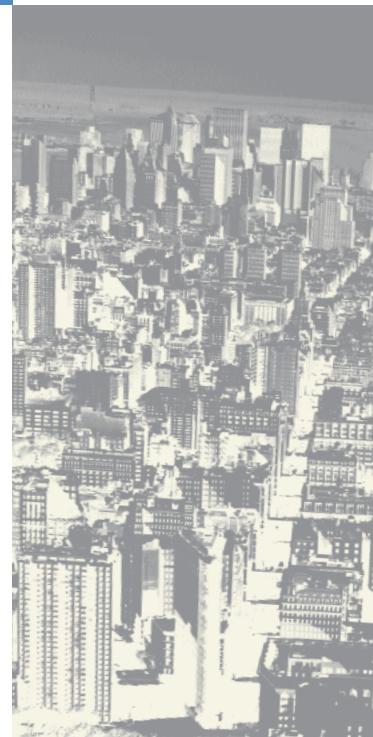
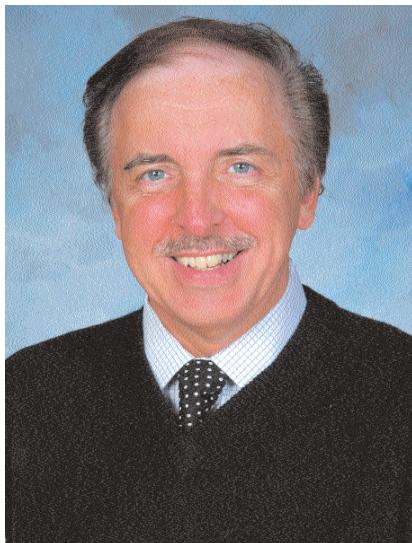
Please consider sending us some news about yourself that we could share with all our alums in the next issue of the magazine. Getting married? Had a recent success? Active in service to others? It's news that we would like to share with the entire St. Joseph family. I'd like you to think of *Horizons* as your magazine to a great extent and a means keeping you in contact with one another as well as your alma mater. Just e-mail me at stjosprincipal@aol.com with news or use the attached envelope to send along information for our *Class Notes* section.

On April 24, 2010 we will be holding a dinner dance at the school. We hope that this will provide another opportunity to renew old friendships. We look forward to welcoming you back to your alma mater!

Sincerely,

LUKE NAWROCKI
Principal

"Please consider sending us some news about yourself that we could share with all our alums in the next issue of the magazine. ... It's news that we would like to share with the entire St. Joseph family."



St. Joseph School

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The St. Joseph School Magazine

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Principal • Luke Nawrocki
Assistant Principal • Annette Fiscina

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Correspondence • *Horizons in Blue and Gold* welcomes your thoughts and comments. Please e-mail to stjosprincipal@aol.com

Web address: www.stjosephschn.org

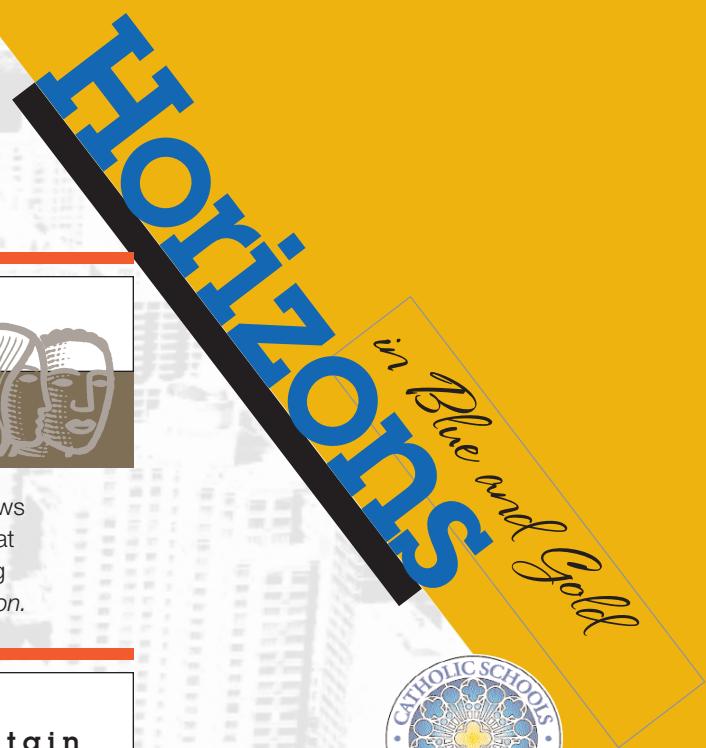
Class Notes



Getting married? Had a recent success? Active in service to others? It's news that we would like to share with the entire St. Joseph family. Just e-mail me at stjosprincipal@aol.com with news or use the attached envelope to send along information for our *Class Notes* section. *Please include your year of graduation.*

Consider Volunteering to be a Class Captain

We would like to provide more opportunities for alums to gather together to share memories and life experiences in elementary school. We would like to begin a program of reunions, but we need help from you to serve as a contact person for the alums from your graduating class. If you are willing to help, please contact us via landmail or email at stjosprincipal@aol.com.



At St. Joseph, parents and teachers work together to LIGHT THE WAY by guiding the children's spiritual, academic, and social growth and providing the children with a strong foundation for their lives.