



ST. SEBASTIAN PARISH SCHOOL'S

BRICK LOT *Bulletin*

November 2021

From the Principal's Office



Thank you to all our students, families, teachers and staff for a great start to the new school year. Our students have continued to thrive even as the school navigates the uncharted waters

of the ongoing pandemic. I am truly thankful for this engaged and involved community. Many thanks to all the parent volunteers who helped with activities and events this fall, including HASA (Open House, Readathon, Monster Mash, staff lunches), the Welcoming Committee (Welcome Back Coffee, New Family Picnic, K and 1st-grade dinner), the Socials Committee (Trunk or Treat), and the Athletic Booster Club and coaches (fall sports). Special thanks to the teachers who are moderators for the after school activities that offer our students fantastic opportunities to expand their learning: Sally Weakland and Maggie Blischak (Power of the Pen); Robert Dedinsky, Debra Landis, and Megan Sanford (MathCOUNTS); and Scott Mason (school band). Thank you also to Mr. Mason and his crew of helpers for another successful Scholastic Book Fair.

Camp Damascus

This year the school has introduced three new retreats for students in grades 6-8 at Camp Damascus, a Catholic camp and retreat center located in Centerburg, Ohio. Each of these retreats is a three-day, two-night experience. The mission of Camp Damascus is "to awaken, empower,

and equip a generation to live the adventure of the Catholic faith through world-class programs in an environment of encounter." We believe this experience will have a positive impact on our students as they continue to grow in mind, body, and spirit.

The 6th-grade retreat's theme is "Faith and Science," with lessons centered on four perfect relationships: man's relationship with God, with himself, with others, and with creation. The 7th-grade retreat's theme is "Leadership and Community," with a focus on being called to be leaders and the lesson that to be a strong leader, we must first be a follower of Jesus and one who serves others. The 8th-grade retreat focuses on Confirmation, with participants urged to decide to do four things during their encounter: turn away from what is holding you back in life, make Jesus the Lord of your life, receive the gift of new life given through the spirit, and embrace and live the mission of the church. The students who chose to attend these optional retreats shared their thoughts about which activities or experiences were most impactful, and I am pleased to share their thoughts with you:

6th-Grade: "[The activities] really helped me feel open to all of my brothers and sisters of Catholicism. I loved it because I felt safe." / "I liked all of the experiences, I felt so close to God and so happy." / "At the second club time, all of us were crying, now I feel that I can show more of my emotions."

7th-Grade: "The most impactful experience at Camp Damascus was the group activities. Most of them were hard and felt impossible, but with all of our cabin mates working together, we did it." / "One activity that most impacted



Camp Damascus Activities



my spiritual self was adoration. We go to adoration every week so you would think this wouldn't make too much of an impact. However, adoration at Camp Damascus was different. We all made a circle around one person and put our hands on their shoulders. The counselor said words that were very touching."

8th-Grade: "They teach us to pray and learn more about what God wants us to do." / "I like the prayer labs because it was time for quiet reflection." / "Damascus was fun and the food was great." / "I liked archery tag and small group." / "I like the small groups because you can name your thoughts."

Best Wishes

As we approach Thanksgiving and Christmas, I extend best wishes to you and your families for a joyful and blessed holiday season.

Yours in Christ,

Anthony Rohr
Principal

Questions or Suggestions?

Please email Anne Dennee, newsletter editor, at Anne@DenneeFamily.com

From the STEM Coordinators

Grades K-3, by Susan Vernon

There were a lot of STEM activities in the primary grades this quarter! Our kindergarten students built towers out of marshmallows and toothpicks. They were great engineers! The



1st-graders were busy with a pumpkin investigation and classroom "makerspace" activities just in time for Halloween! Students in 2nd grade were busy exploring apples in honor of Johnny Appleseed Day. They counted and graphed apple seeds, made apple diagrams, wrote stories, and created several art pieces! Our 2nd-graders also learned all about hand and arm bones and then completed an art project to draw these bones! They used olive oil to paint them, and when they were hung in the windows, the pictures looked just like x-rays! The 3rd-graders used tiles to represent division problems and show the relationship between multiplication and division.

Grades 4-6, by Jennifer Slegus

The 4th-grade students were busy during the 1st quarter with many STEM-based activities. They began the year with an activity titled "Save Fred" that required students to work together to save a gummy worm that had fallen into a lake. They used critical thinking skills and teamwork to rescue Fred. Our 4th-graders have also been learning about the scientific method. They completed a pendulum swing lab, which focused on the scientific process and taught students how to record data and how the length of the string affects the speed of the swing of the pendulum. This Halloween, the students participated in a pumpkin STEAM lab. They used their math and science skills to measure circumference, test for buoyancy, and compare characteristics of their pumpkins. They created a character and used their artistic talents to make their character come to life, and they finished by writing a story to describe their character. The 4th-graders have also been studying animals and their adaptations. They are working on an individual animal research project. They are also working in small groups on several different animals and creating a display showing the animal in its habitat while describing specific adaptations and environmental facts.

Our 5th-graders have been busy learning with many hands-on activities as well. The 5th-grade class compared the scientific



method and the engineering design process in the "penny boat challenge" lab. They designed a boat using only foil

and tested its buoyancy by adding pennies. They were able to improve their design and retest the buoyancy. After learning about photosynthesis, the 5th-graders extended their lesson with a leaf chromatography lab in which they discovered why leaves change colors in the fall.

The 6th-graders have completed several science labs such as a penny, microscope, and mineral lab. They were challenged with a PBL (problem based learning) activity. Students needed to find a real world issue in our community and come up with possible solutions. Then, they were tasked to make smaller versions of their solutions to display. They then used these to pitch ideas to "investors." The students completed a STEM project using construction materials with the requirements of recreating an ancient Sumerian city state. Our 6th-graders also completed a virtual tour of 9/11 memorials to learn and understand how culture influences the remembrance of a life-changing event.

Grades 7-8, by Megan Sanford

In 7th-grade, students studied the engineering design process through the following STEM challenges: 1) Using only scotch tape and paper, build a structure that will hold a textbook at least six inches off the ground; 2) Using only scotch tape and paper, build a structure that will hold an egg two feet off the ground; 3) Build the highest, free-standing structure you can build using just one 8.5 x 11 sheet of paper; 4) Build a paper airplane and see which design flies the farthest; 5) Using 10 gumdrops and 20 toothpicks, design a structure that can hold the weight of a large textbook; 6) Design a bridge out of popsicle sticks and glue that span tables that are one foot apart and be able to hold at least two text books without breaking. The students created innovative designs and displayed impressive collaboration! Our 7th-grade students also prepared and utilized our drone technology to take overhead pictures at Trunk or Treat and the Living Rosary prayer.



All of our junior high students are preparing science fair projects on a topic of their choice. The science fair is an opportunity for students to apply the scientific method to independently research an idea and design an experiment. Science fair projects give our students an opportunity to explore science outside of the standard curriculum. It teaches life skills of inquiry, design, time management, and communication. Our junior high students have also recently created logic/suspense stories. Many of them contributed school-related mysteries solved by Detective Demetrius Demarcus and his sidekick Stanley. A collection of the logic stories may be forthcoming! Finally, in 8th-grade science classes, students studied experimental design and data analysis. Using data from the CDC, students graphed and analyzed current Covid-19 statistics. Students discussed important statistical topics like trends, correlation and causation.

News and Notes

Trunk or Treat

Despite a dreadful weather forecast, the rain held off for this year's Trunk or Treat Social on Oct. 15. Organizer Missy Knauer reports that it was the biggest and best since the event started in 2017, with 160 families in attendance, 47 trunks decorated, and 320 students having a blast. In addition, the event raised over \$3,000 for our wonderful teachers. This year's winner for best trunk was the Haller family's funky 70's-groovy creation! Thank you to the Knauer family for hosting this fun family event.



Monster Mash

Boys and their "mummies" were happy for the return of the Monster Mash on Oct. 21. Thank you to HASA and organizers Kathy Brunton and Zorica Brdarski for hosting this always popular event. All the ghosts and goblins (and baseball players,



pirates, knights, super heroes, cartoon characters, and even Santa Claus) had a great time!

Welcome New Teachers!



Tyler King, Spanish Teacher

Education/Experience: B.A. Spanish; B.A. Global Studies War & Peace, Ohio University; 2 years teaching experience

Why I Like Teaching: "I am passionate about getting to know students and helping them get excited about learning. Every student learns differently, and I love finding new ways to engage each student in the classroom and help them reach their goals and full potential."



Cassie Laube, Physical Education/Health Teacher

Education/Experience: B.S. Sports Management, The University of Akron; 5 years of teaching experience

Why I Like Teaching: "I enjoy coming to work every day because I feel like I make a difference. Physical education and health provide lifelong skills of staying active and healthy. In addition, physical education teaches the students teamwork and other skills which transfer knowledge to other learning areas."



Ashley Mullen, Art Teacher

Education/Experience: B.A., Art History, Kent State University; M.A. Education, University of Akron; 5 years of teaching experience.

Why I Like Teaching: "I like to see students get in touch with their creative side. Einstein said, 'Creativity is intelligence having fun.'"



Tracy Tonkovich, Preschool Teacher

Education/Experience: B.S. Early Childhood Education; 29 years of teaching experience

Why I Like Teaching: "I enjoy teaching because I have a passion for sparking a lifetime love of learning in every child."

Save the Date! St. Sebastian Spectacular: February 26

Please save the date for this year's St. Sebastian Spectacular, Saturday, February 26, marking its 18th year of raising money for our parish school and its students. This year's committee, chaired by Carrie Pozsgay and Lori Krohn, has been working hard to host an evening of great fun, filled with exciting live and silent auction items, raffles and a few other surprises. Your \$90 ticket will include delicious appetizers, an open bar, and a sit down dinner along with music and auctions. There are also exciting sponsorship opportunities, including a VIP pre-party just for our event sponsors.

As in past years, we will be raising money for tuition reduction for all our students along with investments in technology and our school's endowment. This year's paddle raise will focus on improvements in the audio, video and lighting equipment in Zwisler Hall, a space that gets used by so many and welcomes us all.

If you are interested in making a donation, becoming a sponsor or volunteering for this year's Spectacular, please contact Lori Krohn at (330-690-7467, lori@fclpnt.com) or Carrie Pozsgay at (330-289-4093, carriepozsgay@me.com).



Flight 93 Memorial Field Trip

Our 8th-grade students were fortunate to visit the Flight 93 National Memorial in Shanksville, Pa. on September 10. As in years past, our students viewed the movie *Flight 93* during the early morning bus ride to the memorial, which helped the students understand what the passengers and crew went through on that day.

Since our students visited the memorial one day before the 20th anniversary observance of the Sept. 11 attacks, they were incredibly fortunate to personally view chalk drawing portraits of all 40 of the Flight 93 passengers and crew. These temporary drawings, which were designed to fade away over time, were created Sept. 8-10 by artists from across the country for the 20th anniversary ceremonies on Sept. 11. Our students were even able to view some of the artists still at work.

Our students were also very fortunate to cross paths with Gordy Felt, president of Families of Flight 93, who took time to speak with our students about his brother, Edward, and the 39 other extraordinary heroes from Flight 93. He discussed the amount of time the passengers and crew had (less than an 8th-grade-class period) not only to deal with the terrorists who claimed to have a bomb, but also to evaluate the situation, devise a plan, vote on that plan, and act on that plan. Mr. Felt, who has spoken to our student groups on several other visits, also talked about how these 40 men and women all wanted to get home to their families, to see them and hug them again. Instead, they came together for the greater good and sacrificed their lives to do so.



Other families of the Flight 93 heroes were in attendance that day, and our students were very respectful of these families



and of the hallowed grounds as they toured the site, including the Tower of Voices wind chime tower, the Visitor Center, and the Memorial Plaza. The experience is always memorable and impactful, as evident in the following student reflections:

"The sacrifice made wasn't forgotten, it teaches us bravery. The windchimes also represent unity to me. There was unity between the passengers to take down the terrorist threat."
-Alex Krohn

"In one of my photos I captured the families paying their respects to their lost ones. This made me wonder how they feel through everything that's happened to them and how it feels to be related to a HERO!" - Sophia Burgoyne

"When the wind blows just right, a beautiful melodic sound can be heard coming from the tower that was truly a wonderful representation of the heroic voices they stand for."
-Bella Incorvia

"The 93-foot-tall Tower of Voices is a symbol of unity. The passengers came together to defeat the terrorists. I love this memorial because of the beautiful noise. Unity is a crucial component of our nation's culture. This is a wonderful symbol of our country's unity." -Timothy Sullivan.

University of Akron Zips Racing Team

In October, our school enjoyed a visit from the University of Akron's "Zip Racing" team, one of the country's top student racecar teams. Zips Racing was established more than 30 years ago to provide UA students with hands-on experience and to show how what they learn in class can be applied to working in industry. Every year students design and build a racecar to compete in competitions around the world. St. Sebastian welcomed three of the current team members (Elaina: co-captain and lead electrical engineer, Derrick: co-captain and engineer, and John: driver and engineer) and the team's faculty advisor, Dr. Dan Deckler, a professor of engineering at the University of Akron who also happens to be a St. Sebastian parishioner.

The highlight, of course, was watching the team show off one of their cars in action by driving it around the brick parking lot. Fr. Valencheck and teachers Molly Karg and Jennifer Smee even got a chance to drive a race car! The UA team talked to

our students about both of the cars the team brought with them: a combustion engine race car and an electric race car. Our students were able to see these cars up close, and a few students, including Zoey Zachardy pictured here, were able to climb into the cars themselves. The UA team also taught our students about the design process, including how the race team uses 3D printers for their car parts. Thank you to Dr. Deckler and the Zips Racing team for providing this great learning experience for our students!



Students in the News

Student Council

Congratulations to the following student council members who were elected by their classmates for the 2021-2022 school year: Alex Krohn (president); Owen Schlueter (vice president); Nick Paxton (secretary); Julia Rea (treasurer); and James Brewer, Joseph Matthews, Robert Butler, and Andrew Gerstenmaier (room representatives). Many of these student council members, pictured below, attended the Oct. 1 First Friday Club of Greater Akron luncheon featuring Dr. Frank O'Linn, Secretary for Education and Superintendent of Schools for the Catholic Diocese of Cleveland. Dr. O'Linn spoke about the history of Catholic education in northeast Ohio, where Catholic education stands now, and the future of Catholic elementary schools, with a focus on Bishop Malesic's "Keeping the Faith" initiative.



Student Ambassadors

Our school's Student Ambassadors program welcomed 15 new members this fall: Gage Caruthers, Lydia Chivers, Louisa Dennee, Andrew Gerstenmaier, Charlotte Gilbert, Brady Kidder, Nicole Krohn, Ethan Marshall-Wack, Giovanni Nonno, Nick Paxton, Jane Porter, Allison Raita, Julia Rea, Alexis Wentz and Peter Zografakis. These 7th-graders will join the current 8th-grade student ambassadors in representing St. Sebastian Parish School at various school and parish events.

St. Sebastian Wins 3rd STEM Education Award

For the third year in a row, St. Sebastian Parish School earned the Governor's Thomas Edison Award for Excellence in STEM Education and Student Research! Our school was one of 45 schools in the state to be selected for this award for the 2020-2021 school year by the Ohio Academy of Science. In addition to the school award, nine of our teachers and staff received individual recognition for their efforts, both in the classroom

and through extra-curricular activities: Christina Friedl (5th grade), Debra Landis (junior high), Jennifer Slegus (4th grade), Jennifer Smee (4th grade), Sally Weakland (junior high), Maggi Blischak (auxiliary services), Robert Dedinsky (6th grade), Megan Sanford (junior high), and Anthony Rohr (principal).



Falls Sports Wrap-Up

Volleyball and Soccer

This year St. Sebastian fielded two girls volleyball teams: a 5th-6th-grade team and an 8th-grade team, with both teams having a fun season and showing great improvement. In soccer, St. Sebastian fielded a boys team and a girls team for 3rd-4th graders, with the boys team notching an impressive five regular season wins. Both our boys and girls 5th-6th-grade soccer teams also had strong seasons, with both teams making it to the CYO semifinals.

Cross Country

This was a historic season for St. Sebastian's cross country team, with the boys 6th-8th-grade team putting in an incredible team performance to win the first CYO cross country team championship in school history! At the Oct. 17 championship meet, our boys team did not have an individual finisher in the top 14, which normally would not bode well for the overall team results. However, our runners placed 15 (Sebastian Blaser), 19 (Marcus Chuba), 25 (Joe Haller), 30 (Quinn Yori), and 31 (Owen Schlueter) to win by 10 points. This fantastic team effort included 13 of our 15 boys setting PR's (personal records). Our girls team was small, but mighty, recording a 4th-place finish. Two of our runners earned individual medals: Julia Rea (5th place) and Daphne Kindbom (7th place), and five of our six girls set PR's. The team once again competed at the state middle school cross country championship in the Columbus area on Oct. 24, where our boys 6th-grade-and-under team won third place! In the 7th-8th-grade races, our girls team took 6th place, and our boys team took 11th place. Congratulations to the cross country team and coaches for a great season!



Football

St. Sebastian offered four flag football teams this year, one each for grades 1-4. St. Sebastian athletes also played on separate tackle football teams for 5th grade and 6th grade, as well as a 7th-8th grade team that went 1-1 in the Tier II CYO playoffs. Huge thanks to all the St. Sebastian Athletic Booster Club and to all the coaches and parents who enabled so many of our students to take to the fields this fall for a great season!

2022-23 Scholarships

Thanks to the generosity of our school and parish community, there are several opportunities for St. Sebastian Parish School students to earn scholarships for next year. Scholarships for the 2022-23 school year, listed here, are available for students currently in grades pre-K-7 (to be applied to next year's tuition at St. Sebastian) as well as 8th grade students (to be applied to high school tuition). The St. Sebastian Parish Foundation, which acts as a clearinghouse of information for all these scholarships, has posted applications and additional information on the school's website at www.stsebastian.org/school/scholarships. The application deadline is Jan. 25, 2022. If you have questions, please contact Anne Dennée at scholarships@stsebastian.org or 330-836-2233, ext. 119. Last year our students earned \$18,500 in scholarship awards!

Scholarships Funded Through the St. Sebastian Parish Foundation

Mary Ley Burke Scholarship – (grades K-7) up to 4 available, merit based
 Christopher James Consilio Scholarship – (grade 8) 1 or more available, essay based
 Dayspring Opportunity Scholarship – (pre-K to 7) up to 2 available, need based
 Elms Family Scholarship – (grade 8) 2 or more available, need based
 Denise Maroon Finley Scholarship – (grade 8) up to 2 available, need based
 Lynn Frey-Steward Scholarship – (grades K-7) 1 available, merit based
 Gerstenmaier Family Scholarship – (grade 8) 2 or more available, merit based
 GOAL Scholarship – (grades 2-7) 3 or more available, merit based
NEW! Hanlon Family Scholarship – (pre-K to 7) 1 or more available, need based
 Frances L. Sharp Scholarship – (grades 4-7) up to 2 available, need based
 John A. Trecaso Scholarship – (grade 8) 1 available, merit based

Scholarships Funded Through Parish School/Parish Related Groups

HASA Youth Christian Service Scholarship – (grade 8) 2 available, merit based
 Knights of Columbus Deacon Terry Peacock Memorial Scholarship – (grade 8) 2 available, merit based
 Sanctuary Society Service Scholarship – (grades 5-8) 1 available, merit based
 St. Irene Scholarship – (grades 1-7, grade 8) 2 available, merit based

SCHOOL CALENDAR AND IMPORTANT DATES

SAVE THE DATE

End of 2nd Quarter ~ Jan. 13
 No School ~ Jan. 14
 No School, MLK Day ~ Jan. 17
 Open House ~ Jan. 30
 Catholic Schools Week ~
 Jan. 30-Feb. 5
 1 p.m. Dismissal ~ Feb. 10
 Parent/Teacher Conferences ~
 Feb. 15, 17
 No School ~ Feb. 18, Feb. 21
 St. Sebastian Spectacular ~ Feb. 26
 Confirmation ~ March 4
 Music Program ~ March 10
 No School ~ March 18, March 21
 End of 3rd Quarter ~ March 25

NOVEMBER

No School	November 5, 8 (Fri. and Mon.)
HASA Meeting with Speaker Ben Tracy	November 11 (Thurs.), 7 p.m.
Ladies Luncheon and Christmas Boutique	November 14 (Sun.), Portage Country Club, 10 a.m.-3 p.m.
Explorer Day (for families of prospective K students)	November 19 (Fri.), 8:15-10 a.m.
Confirmation Meeting (8th grade)	November 22 (Mon.), 7-8 p.m.
No School, Thanksgiving Break	November 24-26 (Weds.-Fri.)

DECEMBER

Christmas Music Program	December 2 (Thurs.)
Christmas Plant Sale Pick Up	December 9 (Thurs.), 2:30-5:30 p.m.
First Reconciliation	December 11 (Sat.), 9:30 a.m.
No School, Christmas Break	December 20-December 31



St. Sebastian Parish School will hold an Explorer Days session on Friday, Nov. 19 from 8:15-10 a.m. Parents and prospective students will enjoy an interactive open house during which they will tour the school, meet our principal, and see our students at work. Future kindergarten students will also have the opportunity to explore the kindergarten classrooms. Interested families may register by calling 330-836-9107 by Nov. 16.