



ST. SEBASTIAN PARISH SCHOOL'S

BRICK LOT *Bulletin*

September 2020

From the Principal's Office



Thank You

As we start the 2020-2021 school year, I want to thank the school community and especially our teachers and staff for all they have done to provide input and make plans for this unusual school year. Your patience, flexibility, and

understanding are much appreciated as we have had to constantly adjust our plans. With so much in flux on a daily basis, communication is essential, and St. Sebastian is fortunate to have strong communication channels including the Bloomz app for direct parent communication and our website for parish-wide communication. Please continue to pay close attention to updates you receive, and don't hesitate to contact me or the office if you have any questions.

Welcome!

Welcome to all the families who are new to St. Sebastian this year. We are looking forward to getting to know you and are very excited to have you as part of the St. Sebastian family. I would also like to welcome our "new" teachers, although none of them are new to our school, since they have all worked at St. Sebastian in other roles: Michele Kellner (kindergarten teacher), Jennifer Kidder (kindergarten teacher), Lesley Starcher (preschool teacher, 4-5-year-olds), and Mary Weitzel (preschool teacher, 3-year-olds). Please see page 2 for more on these great educators.

New Audio and Visual Equipment

Thanks to funding from the Helen Barry Hamlin Library Fund of the St. Sebastian Parish Foundation, the school was able to significantly upgrade the audio equipment used by our teachers by purchasing BEAM audio devices. These small, portable sound bars are enabled with Bluetooth technology that links with new microphones that each teacher will wear on a lanyard. This will allow all students to clearly hear their teacher's voice in the classroom as well as in the distance learning setting where audio quality is especially important. At the start of the year, our teachers will be rotating into classrooms rather than the students switching classrooms. Since the new XD microphones are wearable, teachers can easily take their microphone into any classroom, and the microphone will quickly pair with the BEAM audio

device in that classroom. In addition, the funding also enabled the school to purchase new document cameras for each classroom to replace our outdated cameras. The new HoverCam document cameras can be used in many ways. As a lesson recorder, the HoverCams can record hundreds of hours of video and include picture-in-picture capability so teachers can show their faces while narrating a lesson along with video images, websites, PowerPoint Slides, etc. The HoverCams will allow teachers to model science experiments, show work with math manipulatives, share worksheets, etc. The HoverCams are compatible with video conferencing programs such as Zoom and Google Meet, and they have better image quality and versatility than standard webcams. The cameras come with whiteboard software, for common whiteboard functions, and annotation software, for making annotations over any image, live video, or recording. Special thanks to the Helen Barry Hamlin family members for their generosity and support.

Classroom Improvement Initiative

In recent years, proceeds from the school's largest annual fundraiser, the St. Sebastian Spectacular, have been designated to our Classroom Improvement Initiative. As part of this effort, new built-in classroom storage units have been installed. New lockers for grades 1-3 and additional lockers for grades 4-6 have been delivered and will soon be installed. New classroom furniture has been ordered, although production issues related to the pandemic as well as increased demand for modular furniture have resulted in our purchase being placed on back order. Stay tuned! We are optimistic that this final piece of the project will soon be in place.

Accreditation/School Safety Plan

St. Sebastian Parish School received notification in May that our status as a fully accredited school was renewed, and we are looking forward to working on the goals we established as part of the 2-year accreditation review process. One goal is to enhance our social and emotional learning, and we are

excited to be offering the Friendly program as part of that effort. For more details, see page 4. Also, as I have announced before, last year our school safety plan underwent an extensive review and revision. The safety of our students is our highest priority, and while we have a strong safety plan, we are always alert to new issues and adapting our plan accordingly. For example, teachers will receive instruction from safety experts before school starts on how to adapt our safety plans to pandemic protocols. While details of our school safety plan must not be publicized in order for it to remain effective, please know our students receive grade-level-appropriate instruction and communication, and the school practices state-required drills and lockdown drills regularly. If you have any questions, please reach out to your child's teacher or to me. We are happy to answer your questions.

Forward with Christ in Hope

I attended this year's online Bishop's Convocation, the annual kickoff to the school year for educators in the Cleveland Diocese. The theme was "Forward with Christ: A Path to Renewing Catholic Life," and I found the message of working together as a people of faith to be very hopeful. During the event we watched a section of a TED Talk by Pope Francis where he stated, "Quite a few years of life have strengthened my conviction that each and every one's existence is deeply tied to that of others: Life is not time merely passing by, life is about interactions." **Our interactions as a school community may be different this year, but it doesn't take away how meaningful our interactions can be.** Knowing that "with Him, we can do all things," I have great hope for this school year, and I hope you will join me in adopting the theme of "Forward with Christ in Hope" for the coming year.

Yours in Christ,

Anthony Rohr
Anthony Rohr
Principal

Questions or Suggestions?

Questions or suggestions for the newsletter? Please email Anne Dennée, Newsletter Editor, at Anne@DenneeFamily.com.

Four Teachers Move to New Classrooms

Michele Kellner Kindergarten Teacher

Education: University of Michigan-Flint, B.S. in Elementary Education;

Oakland University, M.A. in Early Childhood; Notre Dame College, Reading Endorsement.

Experience: Michele Kellner is moving to the big building this year after four years of teaching the 4-year-old class at St. Sebastian's Center for Early Learning. Prior to that, she taught preschool in Doylestown (2 years) and preschool and kindergarten in Michigan (10 years).

Why I like teaching: I enjoy working with my little kiddos because every day is a new and wonderful experience. The excitement that I see in their eyes and the great stories bring happiness to my day.



Lesley Starcher

Preschool Teacher, 4- and 5-year-olds

Education: University of Akron, B.S. in Early Childhood Education

Experience: Lesley Starcher is taking a lead teacher role for a 4- and 5-year-old class at St. Sebastian's Center for Early Learning after working for the last three years as a lead teacher for a 3-year-old class and one year as classroom aide.

Why I like teaching: I love to see the fun and excitement students have towards learning. At the early ages, there is so much for them to explore and create. Also, watching them form friendships that may last a lifetime is so encouraging.



Jennifer Kidder Kindergarten Teacher

Education: University of Akron, B.S. in Education.

Experience: Jennifer Kidder is now a lead kindergarten teacher after working for the last five years as a kindergarten assistant. She has also served as a long-term substitute teacher at our school.

Why I like teaching: I love to witness children exploring and discovering new skills and abilities each day! I also enjoy being an important part of a child's journey in faith. It brings me so much joy to know that I can leave a lasting, positive impression in a young child's mind!



Mary Weitzel Preschool Teacher: 3-year-olds

Education: University of Dayton, B.S. in Education; Walsh University, M.A. in Education

Experience: Mary Weitzel began teaching in 1993 and taught for six years before deciding to stay home when her oldest child was born. She began at St. Sebastian in 2017 as a classroom aide in the Center for Early Learning.

Why I like teaching: I like to see the children's faces light up when being taught something new, especially science experiments.



Pat Strausser, Carolyn Schmidlin and Margaret Myers



Palma Sferro

Best Wishes to Our Recent Retirees!

St. Sebastian Parish School extends our deep thanks and gratitude to Pat Strausser, Carolyn Schmidlin, Palma Sferro and Margaret Myers who retired in 2020 after many years of service educating our young people. **Margaret Myers** retired after a 38-year teaching career, with her last 20 years as a kindergarten teacher at St. Sebastian. Margaret and her husband Mark's three children all attended St. Sebastian: Mark '04, Margaret '02, and Bridget '10. **Carolyn Schmidlin** retired after 34 years at St. Sebastian, including 23 years of teaching kindergarten. Carolyn started in 1986 as a kindergarten aide, a job she held for 11 years. Her three children are St. Sebastian graduates: Bryan '91, Eric '94, and Mary '94.

Palma Sferro is retiring from St. Sebastian after 25 years of teaching Spanish at our school. Palma has deep ties to St. Sebastian, dating back to when she attended the school, graduating in 1967. **Pat Strausser** began as an office volunteer in the 1980s. From 1998-2020, Pat worked as a classroom aide, working most of her 31 years at St. Sebastian with the 2nd-grade classes. Pat and her husband, Jim, have two sons who are St. Sebastian graduates: Stephen '90 and Bobby '92 and they have a granddaughter, Katherine, who will be joining us in kindergarten this year. Best wishes to these wonderful educators!

Congratulations Eighth Grade Graduates



2019-2020 Academic Achievement & Scholarship Recipients

ARCHBISHOP HOBAN HIGH SCHOOL

Moreau Placement Test Scholarship	Jack Doucet
Dujarie Placement Test Scholarship	Leo Bates, James Bordenkircher
Daniel Jay Dietzler '68 Memorial Scholarship	Madaleyna Burgoyne
Knight Award	Leo Bates, James Bordenkircher, Jack Doucet
Alumni Legacy Scholarship	Madaleyna Burgoyne
Denise Maroon Finley Memorial Scholarship	Madaleyna Burgoyne

ST. VINCENT-ST. MARY HIGH SCHOOL

Irish Academic Scholarship	Lillian Mendenhall, Maria Petit, Anne Rea, Mason Reiss
Wheeler Family Green & Gold Scholarship	Charlie Caputo, Victoria DeKatch, Andrew Hagey, Jonathan Matthews, Abigail Monaghan, Maria Petit, Kofi Powers, Mia Ross, Clare Rothkopf, Michael Walter
Irish Opportunity Scholarship	Clare Rothkopf
Irish Crusader Scholarship	Jonathan Matthews
John A. Trecaso Scholarship	Mia Ross
Ralph C. Wheeler Memorial Scholarship	Anne Rea, Emily Wentz
Hanlon Family Scholarship	Charlie Caputo
Nick and Eileen Antonino Family Scholarship	Jonathan Matthews, Clare Rothkopf
Thomas and Margaret Antonino Memorial Scholarship	Mia Ross
Stephenson Memorial Scholarship	Clare Rothkopf
Class of 1981, STVM Memorial Scholarship	Mia Ross

FIRESTONE HIGH SCHOOL

International Baccalaureate Program	Brennan Chivers
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WALSH JESUIT HIGH SCHOOL

The Gerstenmaier Family Scholarship	Sydney Borges, Dominick Calleri, Logan Hill, Jack Stahl, Raymond Thompson
The Beck Family Foundation Scholarship	Sydney Borges, Dominick Calleri, Logan Hill, Anysia Reimund, Jack Stahl, Raymond Thompson
Pedro Arrupe Scholarship	Sydney Borges, Raymond Thompson
Walsh Jesuit Award for Academic Excellence	Logan Hill
St. Francis Xavier Award	Logan Hill

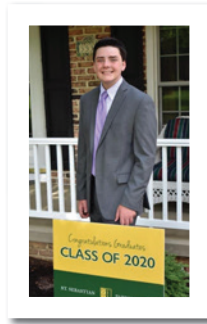
ADDITIONAL AWARDS

Deacon Terry Peacock, Knights of Columbus Scholarship	Madaleyna Burgoyne, Kofi Powers
HASA Youth Christian Service Scholarship	James Bordenkircher, Anne Rea
St. Irene Principal's Scholarship	James Bordenkircher
Father Byrider Award	James Bordenkircher, Anne Rea
Daughters of the American Revolution Citizenship Award	Victoria DeKatch, Maria Petit, Kofi Powers, Anysia Reimund, Clare Rothkopf, Raymond Thompson
St. Sebastian Sanctuary Society Scholarship	Victoria DeKatch
Athlete of Character Award	Victoria DeKatch, Michael Walter
Student Christian Athletic Award	Madaleyna Burgoyne, James Bordenkircher

Students in the News

Class of 2020

Despite the circumstances, the 33 members of the Class of 2020 created special memories during their final months as St. Sebastian. Confirmation Mass took place as planned on March 6, but it was the last “normal” 8th-grade event held last year as school closed down a week later on March 13. While many activities were cancelled, several traditional events took place, with modifications, and were filmed and shared online, including the May Crowning ceremony (May 14), the Pass-It-On Mass (May 27), and the Clap Out (May 28). Principal Rohr and the junior high teachers personally delivered Class of 2020 yard signs to all the students’ homes. Other activities that moved online included the art show, science fairs, and the 8th-grade awards/scholarship presentation — this class earned over \$390,000 toward their high school educations! The 8th-graders put together some special projects on their own, including a video for their kindergarten buddies and a slideshow with pictures from their years at St. Sebastian. Fortunately, the school was able to send off the Class of 2020 with a traditional graduation Mass, with a few adjustments, on June 4. Hats off to our Class of 2020 for conducting yourselves with Terrier Pride throughout your



final time at St. Sebastian! In case you missed it, a few of these students are highlighted below for honors they earned late last spring.

Science Fair: Both the district and state science fairs switched to an online format in 2020, and a team of St. Sebastian students, Anne Rea and Anysia Reimund, scored a “superior” in both competitions! The title of their project, which was entered in the biochemistry category, was “The Effect of Acid on Milk: A Dairy Big Surprise!” It is a major achievement to qualify for the district fair, and only the best projects move on to State Science Day. According to junior high science teacher Megan Ritchie, “State Science Day is the pinnacle of student-originated, inquiry-based science and engineering education for Ohio’s students. State Science Day is one of the largest science fairs in the nation and is the academic equivalent of a state athletic championship. We are so proud of these young ladies for their amazing work and perseverance!”

Power of the Pen: Sydney Borges, who had won first place overall at the Kent State regional Power of the Pen competition in February, also earned the top post-regional award. Although there was not a state-wide competition, Sydney earned a “Best of the Best” award for 2020 when one of her essays from the regional competition was selected as a winner against essays from all the regional competitions. Now that’s a powerful pen! Congratulations, Sydney!

Friendzy Program Coming This Year

St. Sebastian is excited to be participating in a national social and emotional learning program called Friendzy. Friendzy is a friendship program designed for schools that recently became an official partner with the National Catholic Educational Association. Friendzy aims to tackle the friendship challenges every child faces by teaching students what it means not only to have good friendships, but also how to be really good friends.

The program was founded by parents who saw the rise of smartphones and other technology result in the most technologically connected and yet most socially disconnected generation ever. They observed children lose their ability to navigate face-to-face friendships or create strong social connections, leading to loneliness as well as rising levels of anxiety, depression, self-harm and harm of others.

Friendzy incorporates strategies for developing the social and emotional skills that lead to greater success and happiness later in life. The program draws on data and research showing that social and emotional learning provides many benefits to students, including improved academic performance, attitudes, behaviors and relationships with peers, as well as deeper connections to school, fewer delinquent acts and reduced emotional distress.

St. Sebastian will be using the biblical model, which teaches students God’s design for friendship. Using the lens of scripture, the Friendzy program will focus on teaching five core competencies: self-awareness, self-management, responsible decision-making, social awareness, and relationship skills. More details will be communicated by your children’s teachers as the program is rolled out. Here’s to a great year with a “friendzy” of great friendships!



Save the Date! Spectacular 2021

THIS YEAR’S ST. SEBASTIAN SPECTACULAR

WILL BE HELD

FEBRUARY 13, 2021

More details to come!