



ST. SEBASTIAN PARISH SCHOOL'S

BRICK LOT *Bulletin*

November 2024



FROM THE PRINCIPAL'S OFFICE

We are well into the school year, and it's truly inspiring to see our community living out our theme, Rooted in Christ, Sustained by Living Waters. This theme reminds us daily that our foundation in Christ strengthens and sustains us in all we do. As we grow together in faith and knowledge, we find that our unity, with each of you playing a vital role, is like the living waters that nourish and support our school family. In the classrooms, on the playground, and through our school's many programs, our students are discovering what it means to live with purpose, compassion, and resilience. This year, they are not only deepening their understanding of faith but also learning how their faith can be a gift they share with the world. Thank you for your continued support, prayers, and partnership in this mission. It is a blessing to walk this journey with each of you.

THANK YOU

Thank you to all the parents for volunteering throughout the beginning of the school year. Starting with our new family picnic, open house, and parent prep night, to all of the Halloween parties, the participation has been remarkable. I want to thank HASA for the staff lunches, the monster mash, and all of the other ways our families have supported our school. Thank you also to our Parent Ambassadors and the Welcoming Committee, Socials (especially for the snacks and goodies for the teachers on the first day of school), our Booster Club, and all of our athletic and academic coaches, including cross country, soccer, volleyball, and football. Thank you to the following teachers: Jen Smee and Maggie Blischak (Power of the Pen), Robert Dedinsky, Debra Landis, and Megan Sanford (MATHCounts), Scott Mason (Band), Jeff Beshore (Choir and Cantors), and Anne Riede (Recycling Club). Finally, thank you to all of our students and staff for participating in our first Living Rosary of the school year and to all the parents, families, and friends who came to pray with us.

WELCOME NEW STAFF

A warm welcome is needed for three new staff members, Miss Amira Massey, our Speech and Language Pathologist; Mrs. Kate Ellis, our Gifted Intervention Specialist and coordinator of our Minds in Motion program; and Ms. Brenda Abdelrasoul, our school Psychologist. We are excited to have them join our fabulous team and look forward to the expertise and guidance they have to offer our students!

TEACHER COMPENSATION

I'd also like to follow up on Father Valencheck's recent State of the Parish Address regarding teacher compensation. Thanks to your generous support through events like the Spectacular and tuition assistance programs, including the Ohio EdChoice Scholarships, Angel Scholarship Fund, Foundation scholarships, and other assistance opportunities, we've been able to take important steps to ensure that our teachers are paid fairly and competitively for their dedication and hard work. To bridge the gap between last year's salaries and our target structure, we are implementing a combination of raises and bonuses this year and next, keeping us on track to meet our target by the 2026-2027 school year. This plan, informed by valuable data from the diocese and local markets—including both public and Catholic schools—allows us to roll out a new step salary schedule for our teachers, acknowledging their invaluable role and commitment to our mission. Thank you for making this possible—your support directly impacts our teachers, our students, and the future of Catholic education at St. Sebastian Parish School.

ST. FRANCIS PROCESSION

This calendar year marks the 800th anniversary of St. Francis' Canticle of the Creatures. In honor of this special milestone in our faith, our school participated in a procession of prayer and peace. Father Marcelli began with a prayer over the PA system, offering a special blessing for Weller and all our loved pets. He then processed through each hallway, accompanied by student servers and some of our choir members singing *For All the Saints*. Students brought photos and mementos of their pets, past and present, and we prayed for the well-being of God's creatures and peace for all His creation.

Yours in Christ,
Anthony Rohr
Principal

WELLER'S WORLD!

Weller recently made a special visit to each classroom, bringing smiles and excitement to students and staff alike. He proudly demonstrated some of his favorite tricks, showcasing the skills he's been perfecting over the past few months. This visit also included a milestone moment as Weller practiced a new trick (wiping his face), marking the final step needed to complete his canine conditioning class. We're thrilled to announce that he passed with flying colors, officially achieving his title that celebrates his hard work in flexibility, balance, stamina, coordination, and strength! During the visit, Weller also handed out his second edition therapy dog trading card to each student and staff member. Be sure to add this new edition to your collection!



FROM THE STEM COORDINATORS

Grades K-3, by Sue Vernon

This quarter the spotlight shines on the 2nd grade and kindergarten! Our kindergarteners took advantage of the bright fall days and went leaf collecting. They really appreciated our beautiful campus! Kindergarteners also showed their engineering skills by building marshmallow towers! Wow!

The second graders met with their 6th-grade buddies to practice the Engineering Design Process. Their challenge? Create a special jack-o-lantern with limited materials. The students worked well together as they brainstormed, organized, and then created a plan for their design. During a second meeting, the partners executed their plan. The finished products were impressive! Our 2nd-grade students also met in the innovation lab to work on a Project Wet activity. The children learned about the water cycle through experiments and even made a portable diagram to bring home! Finally, 2nd-graders welcomed Halloween with some scary skeletons. They traced their hands and drew in all the bones. Using Q-tips and vegetable oil, they painted over the bones and hung them in the windows to mimic X-rays! Spooky!

Grades 4-6, by Jen Slegus

We have been busy in the middle grades! The 4th-grade students' first activity this school year was to "Save Fred". They worked with partners to save a gummy worm that had fallen into a lake and could not swim. They were given specific tools to use but were not allowed to use their hands. The students have also been learning about different animal and plant adaptations. The students completed a simulation lab where they discovered the differences and similarities of birds' beaks. They used different tools (ex: toothpicks for spearing and clothespins for pinching) and imaginary food (ex: beans for grubs and marbles for snails) to show how well birds' beaks are adapted for eating their specific food. During math class, the students were given a challenge to design their own haunted house. They had to decide on a theme, design a floor plan with specific requirements, and then create it on an online grid system where they calculated the area and perimeter of the rooms.

The 5th-grade class has been busy with the steps of the Scientific Method and the Engineering Design Process. The 5th-grade students were tasked with a job from their "customer", Mrs. Friedl. They were given criteria and constraints, and challenged to build as many paper airplanes as they could in five minutes. The students chose which plane design to use in order to optimize their outcome. Their products were tested by measuring the total distance obtained by their five minutes of work. The 5th-graders also used research, digital tools, and their learning of animal adaptations to simulate food webs in real time.

The 6th-grade class completed a measurement lab where they explored measuring flat and round objects. They also used the Engineering and Design process to create Lego pumpkins with their 2nd-grade buddies.



Grades 7-8, by Megan Sanford

In 7th grade, students studied the engineering design process, empirical evidence, and the scientific method, especially how it will apply to their Science Fair project coming up. We have been busy doing scientific investigations and STEM activities to explore concepts learned in class. The students participated in an H2Olympics Project Wet Lab where they learned about cohesion, adhesion and surface tension. They also enjoyed a lab using candy pumpkins and different liquids (water, milk, Sprite, and vinegar) to explore the scientific method.

In 8th-grade science students studied experimental design and data analysis this quarter. Students have conducted several classroom experiments to practice their skills of writing procedures, testing hypotheses, measurement, data collection and analysis. Several of these experimental design tasks are from our Project Wet curriculum. For example, students completed a lab called "Is there water on Zork?" During this activity the students had to run a series of tests to determine which clear liquid was water. The tests included checking the substance's physical and chemical properties such as reactivity, solubility, density, pH, odor, and cohesiveness. In their recent data project students took on the role of CDC medical researchers to look for trends causing a zombie outbreak. Students discussed important statistical topics like central tendency, organizing data, variation, and correlation. The 8th-graders also attended the Cleveland Metroparks Watershed Stewardship Center for their stream ecology program. Students were able to explore a local stream to learn how it functions as an ecosystem. While at the stream the students studied the water chemistry and completed habitat assessments. Additionally, students got some time in the classroom, learning about erosion and deposition with their interactive stream table.

All students in grades 7-8 are preparing science fair projects on a topic of their choice. 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. Exceptional projects may advance to compete in the regional or district fair.



ST. SEBASTIAN WINS 6TH STEM EDUCATION AWARD

For the sixth year in a row, St. Sebastian Parish School earned the Governor's Thomas Edison Award for Excellence in STEM Education and Student Research! Congratulations and thank you to our students and the following educators, who also earned individual awards: Michelle Antochow, Maggi Blischak, Jennifer Bradley, Molly Burns, Kathy Cardarelli, Giana Dandrea, Robert Dedinsky, Kristin DeKatch, Christina Friedl, Mary Heffern, Michele Kellner, Jennifer Kidder, Debra Landis, Cassie Laube, Anne Riede, Allyn Rose, Megan Sanford, Jennifer Slegus, Jennifer Smee, Lesley Starcher, Karen Swartz, Mary Syzek, and Sue Vernon. St. Sebastian Parish School was one of only 40 schools in the state of Ohio to earn the Award for Excellence, which is awarded annually by the Ohio Academy of Science.

ST. SEBASTIAN SOCIALS NEWS

Trunk or Treat

The 2024 Trunk or Treat Social was held on October 18. The 350 students in attendance had a great time trick-or-treating, and it was the largest gathering to date! There were 46 decorated trunks and 10 chilis in the cook-off, providing tons of fun and delicious treats! Thank you to the hosts, the Knauer and the Kilker families, and thank you to all the families who participated! Each year this event raises funds for the Teacher Appreciation and Wellness Fund, which provides Christmas bonuses, gifts, catered lunches, and more for our wonderful teachers and staff.

Celebrity Bartending Night

Thank you to everyone who helped make the Celebrity Bartending event at Akronym Brewing such a fantastic success! Congratulations to Ms. Heffern, Mrs. Burns, and Mrs. Sullivan who raised the most tips during their shift at this year's Celebrity Night! A special thanks to the Greising family, owners of Akronym Brewing, for allowing us to host this event. It was a fun night and with the generosity of our amazing St. Sebastian community, this event raised over \$3,000 for our Teacher Wellness and Appreciation Fund!



HASA UPDATES

HASA has had a busy start to the school year! We started with a Uniform Exchange before school began in August, hosted the Back to School Open House and a Back to School Prayer Service, organized our first monthly teacher lunch and concluded with Monster Mash, a spooktacular mom and son event. Our Back to School Prayer Service saw over 150 members of our community come together in fellowship on a beautiful fall night in the courtyard with s'mores and a prayer service led by Fr. Marcelli. Thank you to Fr. Marcelli for his time and efforts on this event. Monster Mash was a wonderful evening with 95 "mummies" and 125 sons attending. A special shout out to our committee of third-grade moms who worked so diligently to make this year's event a memorable evening for our students!



GRANDPARENTS' DAY



Grandparents' Day at St. Sebastian Parish School was a heartwarming celebration of faith, family, and community. It was truly special to gather together for Mass, where grandparents and grandchildren joined in worship, deepening the bond that unites our school family. After Mass, grandparents were invited into the classrooms to share in the daily experiences of their grandchildren, connecting with the vibrant learning that takes place every day. It was a joyful occasion, filled with love, gratitude, and the strengthening of our community ties, reminding us all of the importance of family in our faith journey.



STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

Student Council

Congratulations to the following student council members who were elected by their classmates for the 2024-25 school year: President -- Gemma Griffin, Vice President -- Ryan Senko, Secretary -- Sammy Malik, Treasurer -- Jack Clymire, and Room Representatives: Joseph Deagan, Evan Rea, Gabriella Deagan, and Teagan Taffi.



Rooted in Christ, Sustained by Living Waters Retreat, Grades 4 and 5

In September, students in grades 4-5, in partnership with senior students from Hoban High School, participated in a retreat, centered around the theme Rooted in Christ, Sustained by Living Waters. This was a powerful and transformative experience designed to nurture the students' spiritual growth, while fostering teamwork, communication, and critical thinking skills. The retreat offered an opportunity for students to deepen their relationships with both their peers and Christ, allowing them to connect through faith and mutual support.



Camp Damascus

During the first quarter our junior high students all had the opportunity to visit Camp Damascus. Our 6th-grade students attended a Faith and Science Retreat; our 7th graders' retreat focused on Communication, Collaboration, and Compassion; and our 8th-grade students took part in a Confirmation Retreat to help prepare them for their upcoming sacrament. The students were able to spend a few days together in uninterrupted prayer and fellowship, growing closer in friendship, community, and faith.



Flight 93 Memorial Field Trip



In September, our 8th-grade students took part in an important and reverent field trip to the Flight 93 Memorial in Shanksville, PA. This visit has become a cherished tradition for our 8th-grade class, and we are proud to have been able to continue it for the seventh year in a row, offering this profound experience at no cost to our parents. During the visit, our students toured the crash site and the Flight 93 National Museum, where they had the opportunity to learn about and reflect on the tragic events of September 11, 2001. The day was made even more meaningful by a talk from one of the national park rangers, who shared insights and stories that deepened the students' understanding of the heroism and sacrifice that occurred on that day. This field trip not only serves as an educational experience but also as a powerful reminder of the courage and resilience demonstrated by the passengers and crew of Flight 93. We are grateful to be able to offer our students this opportunity to connect with history in such a meaningful way.

Student Quotes:

"If one person did this alone they would not have gotten through, but because they worked together, they saved many lives." -- Zachary Blaser

"One thing spiritually that I took away was the courage of the passengers to stand up against the terrorists. This is a great message to stand up against the bad, whether your life is at stake or not, and to always love and help others." -- Evan Rea

"Religiously, I found it very important that many prayed before fighting to take control of the plane. Even though they died, God and their guardian angel was with them the whole time." -- Clare Kenny

"When we first arrived, we saw the Tower of Voices. It wasn't its sheer size that caught my attention, but the 40 chimes within it, the chimes that represent the 40 voices of the passengers. The Tower of Voices really stood out in a good and beautiful way." -- Gemma Griffin

"The thing I took away from this event spiritually was to always have hope in God, and to believe in him always, because you never know what could happen in the future." -- Raminta Chura



NEWS AND NOTES

Fall Sports Wrap-Up Cross Country and Soccer

For the 4th year in a row, our boys grades 6-8 team won the CYO Cross Country Championship. James Sellers was the top CYO individual champion, and three other runners scored in the top 10: Nathaniel Chuba (3rd), Pete Kindbom (5th), and Evan Rea (9th). For girls team, Maddie Sellers placed 19th in the CYO Championship. At the state level, our boys team for grades 7-8 took 3rd place, and our boys team for grades 6 and under won the Ohio Cross Country State Middle School Championships! Individual runners who made the podium for grades 6 and under are James Sellers (4th) and Pete Kindbom (7th), and Simon Borges finished 9th in the grades 7-8 race. In soccer, our grades 5-6 Boys Gold Team earned the CYO Runners Up placement. We are very proud of our athletic Terrier teams!



2025-2026 SCHOLARSHIPS

Thanks to the generosity of our school and parish community, there are many opportunities for St. Sebastian Parish School students to earn scholarships for next year. Scholarships for the 2025-26 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. 24, 2025. If you have questions, please contact Anne Dennée at scholarships@stsebastian.org. Last year our students earned over \$48,500 in scholarship awards!

Scholarships Funded Through the St. Sebastian Parish Foundation

- Michael R. Beck III Memorial Scholarship – (grade 8, Walsh Jesuit HS)
- Mary Ley Burke Scholarship – (grades K-7, religious/academic)
- Christopher James Consilio Memorial Scholarship – (grade 8, STVM HS)
- Dayspring Opportunity Scholarship – (pre-K to 7, diverse student body)
- Elms Family Scholarship – (grade 8, Our Lady of the Elms HS)
- Denise Maroon Finley Memorial Scholarship – (grade 8, Hoban HS)
- Lynn Frey-Steward Organ Scholarship – (grades K-7, organ lessons)
- Gerstenmaier Family Scholarship – (grade 8, Walsh Jesuit HS)
- GOAL Scholarship – (grades 2-7, leadership and academic excellence)
- Hanlon Family Scholarship – (pre-K to 7)
- Karg Family Scholarship – (grades K-2)
- Tom and Jeanne LaRose Family Memorial Scholarship – (pre-K to 7)
- William and Mildred Loftus Memorial Scholarship – (grade 8, STVM HS)
- Frances L. Sharp Music Scholarship – (grades 4-7, school band or choir)
- John A. Trecaso Scholarship – (grade 8, STVM HS)

Scholarships Funded Through Parish School/Parish-Related Groups

- HASA Youth Christian Service Scholarship – (grade 8, community service), 2 available
- Knights of Columbus Deacon Terry Peacock Memorial Scholarship – (grade 8, further Catholic education), 2 available
- Sanctuary Society Service Scholarship – (grades 5-8, ushers or altar servers)
- St. Irene Principal's Scholarship – (grades K-7, grade 8, exemplify our school's mission), 2 available



SCHOOL CALENDAR AND IMPORTANT DATES

SAVE THE DATE

- Read-a-Thon -- Feb. 10-14
- No School -- Feb. 14
- Father/Daughter Dance -- Feb. 15
- No School, Presidents' Day -- Feb. 17
- St. Sebastian Spectacular -- March 1
- Early Dismissal, 1:00 -- March 6
- Confirmation -- March 7
- Spring Music Program -- March 13
- Kindergarten Screening -- March 17-18
- No School -- March 21
- Scholarship Mass -- March 27
- Easter Break -- April 18- 25
- Reserve Calamity Day*** -- May 5
- Band/Choir Concert -- May 20
- No School, Memorial Day -- May 26
- Last Day of School -- May 30



NOVEMBER

- 6-7 Parent/Teacher Conferences
- 8 No School; Parent/Teacher Conferences
- 10 Ladies Luncheon & Christmas Boutique
- 22 Explorer Day
- 23 Night at the Races 6:00-10:00 P.M.
- 27-29 No School/Thanksgiving Break

DECEMBER

- 2 No School/Thanksgiving Break
- 5 Winter Music Program 7:00 P.M.
- 11 Sanctuary Society Christmas Tea 6:30 P.M. -- 8:30 P.M.
- 17 Band/Choir Concert 7:00 P.M.
- 23-31 No School/Christmas Break

JANUARY

- 1-3 No School/Christmas Break
- 10 Family Game Night
- 16 End of Second Quarter
- 17 No School/Teacher Professional Development Day
- 20 No School/MLK Observance
- 26 Catholic Schools Week Open House 10:00 A.M. -- 12:00 P.M.



NIGHT AT THE RACES

Save the date for the annual St. Sebastian Booster Club's Night At The Races! November 23, from 6pm-10pm in Zwisler Hall.

Save the Date: School Musical, May 9-10

St. Sebastian is so very excited to announce that we are bringing back the theater program! This year we will be performing the musical, *Annie Jr.* This will take place the weekend of May 9-10, 2025. More information to come, including ways you can help, but save the date because you won't want to miss this!



Save the Date: St. Sebastian Spectacular, March 1



This year's Spectacular will be held on March 1, 2025, with the theme, "One Spectacular Sensation"! This is our school's largest annual fundraising event, raising funds to enrich your child's educational experience. **This year's focus will center on the Arts & Culture Fund, securing funds for necessary upgrades to our Band, Art, Music, and Drama programs.**

To volunteer and share your ideas, reach out to our co-chairs Megan Azar (330-803-7477) and Jen Toth (330-608-1132). Parent volunteers and help is always appreciated as we plan this fun event!