



Marist Schools Newsletter

January 2010

Special Christmas at St. Joseph Academy

On the final day of school before the Christmas recess, the entire St. Joe school community gathered for prayer and singing of Christmas carols. Of note was the Nativity scene featuring a live baby Jesus and three sheep running around in the hay. Over twenty costumes were provided by the local Methodist Church in Brownsville.

St. Brendan's Students Help those with HIV/AIDS

Celebrate Christmas

Twenty-one students from St. Brendan High School in Miami spent their first day of Christmas break serving children and families affected by HIV/AIDS.



The school's AIDS Awareness Club organized a Christmas party in conjunction with the Center for Positive Connections and Empower U, Inc., non-profits serving persons with HIV/AIDS in Miami. About seventy children and their families attended.

Ainhoa Tollinche, religion teacher at St. Brendan's, helped the students gather toys, cosmetic kits, DVDs and sporting goods for these children who have HIV or whose parents suffer from the disease. Tollinche has spent nine years coordinating the AIDS awareness program.

"It made me happy seeing the little kids running around, happy and crazy and full of cotton candy, looking at the toys all excited," said Katrina Torres, a senior at St. Brendan and one of the AIDS club officers. "That's why I like doing this." Her family, she said, fully supports her involvement in the AIDS club.

Read the full article by Brenda Tirado Torres of the Florida Catholic at: <http://shar.es/aO7P8>

Religious Education Conference in March

Twenty-five teachers from Australian Marist schools will be attending a religious education congress in Anaheim, California, from March 18 to 21. Peter McNamara, the Director of Marist Ministries in Australia, has invited anyone from the US Marist schools who is attending to join his group for focus and prayer, and to develop connections. For more information, e-mail Peter at pmcnamara@fms-sydney.org.au.

Rest in Peace

Mount St. Michael Academy mourned the death of junior Kyle Rembert. Kyle died November 7 as a result of a carbon monoxide leak in his home. Please keep Kyle's family and the Mount school community in your prayers.

Central Catholic High School marked the passing of the father of Chris Sullivan, Assistant Principal at the school. Chris' dad was a long-time teacher at Central until his retirement a few years ago. Please keep Chris, his family and all at Central Catholic in your prayers.

New Marist Provincial and Council Installed.

At the November provincial chapter, Brother Ben Consigli was formally installed as the new provincial superior for the Marist Brothers in the U.S. Brother Ben was most recently the Director of Marist Education. Brother Ben will be assisted by his councilors:

- Brother Roy George, former principal of Archbishop Molloy HS, who was also named as the Vice Provincial.
- Brother Hank Hammer, currently academic dean at Marist HS, Chicago and former Director of Marist Evangelization.
- Brother Kevin Handibode, president of Christopher Columbus HS
- Brother James Kearney, former Superintendent of Schools for the New York Archdiocese
- Brother Ken Hogan, currently a guidance counselor at Central Catholic and former Superintendent of Schools for the diocese of Manchester NH
- Brother Sean Sammon, former Superior General



Marist Schools Newsletter

January 2010

- Brother Steven Schlitte, principal of Marist High School in Bayonne NJ and

America will be invited to help staff the school, providing a valuable bridge between cultures.

Marist Brother Led Australian Government to Support Catholic Education

The National Catholic Education Association recently featured Brother Kelvin Canavan, who led a grassroots campaign that increased government support for students in all non-government schools from a mere \$18 in 1969 to \$8,225 per student in 2008. Brother Canavan's work has allowed Catholic schools in Australia to keep tuition to \$1400 in elementary schools and \$2400 in secondary schools.



What good is it to me that Mary gave birth to the Son of God fourteen hundred years ago, if I do not also give birth to the Son of God in my time and in my culture? We are all meant to be mothers of God. God is always needing to be born.

Meister Eckhart
Medieval Mystic

US Marists Consider Opening a Cristo Rey School

The Marist Brothers are exploring creative ways to finance Catholic education for the poor. This year, Bro. James Adams and Bro. Albert Phillip are conducting a feasibility study for a Cristo Rey high school for children of Mexican immigrants in Albuquerque, New Mexico. Four days a week, Cristo Rey students attend classes during an extended school day; on the fifth day, they work at entry level jobs, such as mail clerk or receptionist, at sponsoring local businesses. Each job is staffed by five students in rotation during the week. Their salary pays most of the tuition, enabling students of limited means to attend Catholic high school. In addition to a strong academic education, students learn job skills and establish a track record of reliability for future employment. During the feasibility student, the Brothers seek business partners willing to employ students, locate a school building, and obtain the support of the local diocese and clergy. If the project goes forward, Marist Brothers from Mexico and Latin

Listening
Enlightening Dialogue
Willing service
Availability
Gentleness
Tolerance
Courtesy
Mutual Support
Silence
Prayer
Meditation

Marist Virtues
Water From the Rock

Marist Schools Induct Brothers and Faculty into School Halls of Fame

On November 21, Marist High School in Bayonne, NJ, recognized Brother William Maske's 38 years of service by inducting him into the school's Hall of Fame. Brother Bill has served as a teacher, athletic director, assistant principal and coach at the school. He also served as assistant principal at Bishop Carroll HS in Pennsylvania. He is currently a full-time math teacher.

Brother Edmund Sheehan and Mr. Fred Panzer were similarly honored by the alumni of Christopher Columbus High School in Miami on December 8. Brother Edmund has served for 29 years at Columbus, as teacher, assistant principal, principal and library director. He also served as principal of St. Joseph Academy in Brownsville and assistant principal at Archbishop Molloy High School.

Fred Panzer is a veteran English teacher and currently serves as chair of that department at Columbus. He also teaches at Miami Dade College and Florida International University.



Marist Schools Newsletter

January 2010

Roselle Students Walk in the Footsteps of the Homeless

In November, twenty students from Roselle Catholic participated in "Project Tent City". They experienced the life of a homeless person for one day in the school's parking lot. They experienced the challenges of homelessness, cold, hunger, sleeplessness and fear, developing a greater awareness of the plight of the poor.

Bro. David Hall Visits St. Joseph Academy

St. Joseph Academy's administration hosted their annual faculty and staff retreat day. The St. Joe community was blessed to have Bro David Hall FMS, an Australian Marist currently studying in Chicago,, facilitate this retreat. He focused on "Family Spirit: A Distinctive Style for Marist Educators". Marist school administrators will recall Brother David as a major presenter at last summer's Marist Leadership Institute.



Education is not
the filling of a pail,
but the lighting of a fire.

William Butler Yeats

St. Brendan's Student Leads Service Project

There are many girls around the world who would like to change the lives of others, but one particular girl has turned her dream into reality. A junior in St. Brendan High School, Amanda Maya, has created a wonderful service project called "Sabres for Change." This service project calls for people to bring in toys, books, and coloring books for children who are bed-ridden in hospitals. Not only do toy and book stores get to donate, but St. Brendan has the opportunity to contribute as well.

After being diagnosed with Bell's Palsy and living with the left side of her face paralyzed, Amanda became bored and lonely in the hospital. She recalls feeling excited when people would visit and loved when family or friends would stop by and bring books and toys for her to play with.

While Amanda read articles about young girls who made a difference in their own backyards, she gained the

confidence and acquired the tools she needed to create the successful project she is involved with today.

Amanda has recruited other students from St. Brendan's to help her in this wonderful cause. She states that her goal for this project is "to make many children as possible happier by donating as many toys, books, and coloring books as possible". These simple things can make a difference in the life of a child. Amanda wants to make sure that every child she visits has something to keep them entertained while they get better in the hospital.

Marist, Chicago Helps Hurricane Victims

Just before Christmas break, thirty students and five teachers from Marist headed to Orange, Texas, in hopes of bringing a little Marist spirit to a place ravaged by hurricane damage.

Mission accomplished! During the six-day trip, the group worked on three homes, meeting the owners and learning about everything they had been through since the hurricane. The team got to work, hanging drywall and siding at one house, removing all the damaged tile from another, and installing windows and painting at the third.



The long days and hard work were well worth it. The group got to know each other people from the area and workers from Fuller Center Disaster Relief, which coordinates the volunteer efforts.

According to Fuller, December to February is the lowest volunteer time of the year, and with federal programs ending in the area in March, they under pressure to get as much work done as possible. Marist hopes to help in the effort by sending another group in February. Nice going "Red Hawks!"

Columbus Junior Wins SADD Poster Competition

Over 60 posters from many schools, including several magnet art schools were entered in a county-wide contest. The posters extol the virtues of refraining from



Marist Schools Newsletter

January 2010

drinking and driving. Columbus Junior Nicolas Plaza won \$1,000 in scholarship money in this competition sponsored by the Metro Dade police department.

Columbus Robotics Team Take First

On October 11th the Miami Science Museum hosted Bot Pop 2009.

Competing in 25 rounds against 13 teams from local high schools, first place went to Columbus varsity team members Federico Almonte and Rafael Ortiz for their outstanding task robot, Forklift. Second place as well as the Best Sportsmanship Award went to varsity team members Kevin Casanovas and Christian De Leon with their innovative task robot, R1.



Milestones at Guadalupe Middle School

Guadalupe Regional Middle School in Brownsville Texas wrapped up the first semester. Among this fall's accomplishments:

- The Student Council organized and ran our sixth grade orientation
- The first ever student newspaper was launched by journalism students
- A GRMS seventh grader got her poem published in a national anthology
- A GRMS sixth grader won a local essay contest sponsored by the Knights of Columbus
- Religion classes made rosary beads from scratch, creating the beads by hand
- GRMS photography students launched a class photo blog
- Our GRMS art teacher and students used their artwork to raise money for the school by posting their artwork online
- Our eighth grade Carbon Rangers continue to help keep GRMS green by organizing school-wide paper recycling efforts

- Our GRMS choir gave back to the community in December by caroling at a local nursing home

Project Accelerate at Marist High School, Bayonne

Congratulations to Marist High School in Bayonne on the creation of Project Accelerate, a gifted and talented program for seventh and eighth graders in local Catholic elementary schools. Under the leadership of Assistant Principal Alice Miesnik, these students come to Marist for advanced courses including Korean culture, forensic science, and advanced math concepts. The program helps students develop their talents, allows the sending schools to boast of their gifted and talented program, and introduces these students to Marist High School as a recruitment event.

St. Brendan's Welcomes Underprivileged

There's no rule that says only Sabres can spend a day in Paradise. Every year, our school opens its doors up to children from Saint James' Catholic School and allows them to enjoy an entire day of games, food, and excitement. Saint James' Day started as Brother Felix's idea. He wanted to bring children from an underprivileged school over to Saint Brendan and offer them a day of fun.

Deacon Blanco manages most of the event, with the help of Guardian Angels (Saint Brendan students) who are matched with an elementary school child to accompany throughout the day. Students from Campus Ministry and Key Club, as well as freshmen and sophomores interested in helping out, are all able to volunteer as Guardian Angels for this event.

When the Saint James' children first arrive at our school, the excitement in the air is impossible to measure. All of the students are eager to take a look at what our school has to offer and what's in store for them. Sabres plan for this event long before the children actually arrive, so all of the booths are set up in the gym by the time the Saint James' kids get there. There is also music, inflatable slides, and pizza for everyone to enjoy.

On Saint James' Day, the children get to participate in different booths that are all housed inside the gym. Some of the booths have fun games where the children can win school supplies as prizes. However, the event is about



Marist Schools Newsletter

January 2010

much more than just playing games and getting a break from class.

“Before we started Saint James’ Day, we never had a student from Saint James’. Now, even though it is difficult, we have a nice number of students from Saint James attending St. Brendan’. I guess the day here showed them a place they would like to go to for high school,” says Brother Felix about the event.

Although Saint James’ Day revolves around helping out students from a different school, our very own Sabres get to greatly benefit from the event as well. According to Brother Felix, “We get a lot from the day. We learn responsibility, care, and sharing. I think that we get as much as the St. James’ kids.”

This year’s Saint James’ Day was a blast. “I think the kids had a lot of fun,” said Meryl Evans, who ran one of the booths in the gym. “You can tell that the kids were really having an amazing time playing games and winning prizes. It was a special day for the kids and for everybody else who participated.” There is no doubt that students from Saint Brendan and Saint James will both recall this event as a fun and memorable occasion.

Columbus Track and Swimming Champs

The Columbus HS Cross-Country team Won the State Championship for a second consecutive year, establishing itself as the top program in Florida. Congratulations to the team and to head coach Jorge Fleitas and assistant coach Eric Pino.

Columbus Junior Douglas Ramos won the State Championship in Swimming this year. A Mas Scholar, Douglas is the new FHSAA 3A State Champion in the 100 Breaststroke. Congratulations Douglas!

Columbus Participates in Earthwatch Expedition Webcast

Students in AP Environmental Science and AP European History classes at Christopher Columbus High School participated in a “Live From the Field” web video conference on December 2nd while Ms. McCullagh, Social Studies Department Leader, was on the



Earthwatch Expedition “Climate Change and Fragmented Forests” at the Smithsonian Environmental Research Center in Maryland. Students followed Ms. McCullagh’s blog on the earthwatch website and responded to the challenges and questions she posted to engage curiosity and interest about climate change and its impact on forests.

The students had the opportunity to ask questions directly to scientist Nancy Kahn and Ms. McCullagh from the experience. CCHS utilized the Mas Technology Complex’s Building’s Multipurpose Room and its video conferencing technology.

Central Catholic Students Give Back in the Marist Spirit:

Each year, students at Central Catholic High School in Lawrence, Massachusetts, distinguish themselves during the Thanksgiving and Christmas seasons by their generosity and love for others. The faculty and staff strive to instill within each student a sense of gratitude for all that they have been given combined with a concern for those who have not been given as much – for the least favored.

They live out the Marist mission, as individuals and as a school community, as evidenced by their participation in the Annual Lazarus House Turkey & Thanksgiving Food Delivery (by donating over 2,000 food items in the weeks preceding Thanksgiving and by delivering the food baskets to over 700 needy families), their participation in the Christmas Project, which makes a Merry Christmas possible for over 50 needy families, and several other initiatives during the holidays and throughout the year.



Central Catholic, in partnership with Catholic Charities and St. Mary of the Assumption Parish, annually helps families who require assistance to get them through the holiday season. Each homeroom “adopts” one family and is given a family profile (how many people, ages, male or female) with a Christmas List. Through donations and a variety of fundraising efforts, each



Marist Schools Newsletter

January 2010

homeroom assembles the items on the list to ensure a Merry Christmas for each family.

The CCHS community raised a total of over \$12,000 in the three weeks leading up to Christmas for this important initiative. On Monday, December 21, all the gifts were organized in Central Catholic's Memorial Gymnasium and then delivered to organizations and families. This student-driven initiative is in its eighth year and raises over \$10,000 annually (a total of over \$52,000 in the past five years alone).

For the 11th straight year, the CCHS baseball team gave back by holding an event for some local youth. On Tuesday, December 22, 65 fifth graders from the Weatherbee School in Lawrence attended a Christmas Party at Central Catholic, where they played games with approximately 20 CCHS baseball players. Each player buys at least two gifts so that each fifth grader receives a small gift from their older counterparts.

"It's all about giving. 'Tis the season, and I want my players to understand what the Christmas season is truly about," stated baseball coach and teacher Marc Pelletier. "Bringing joy to a young person, not just at Christmas, is a life skill I want my student-athletes to learn as they move into adulthood."

*The object of a New Year
is not that we should have a new year.
It is that we should have a new soul
and a new nose;
new feet, a new backbone,
new ears, and new eyes.*

*Unless you made New Year resolutions,
you would make no resolutions.*

*Unless you start afresh about things,
you will certainly do nothing effective.*

G.K. Chesterton

"TENT CITY" - A homelessness immersion experience at Roselle Catholic High School

"I just kept looking at the sky, waiting for it to get light." These were the words most repeated as the 16 RC students who participated in the "Tent City" homeless immersion experience, shared their thoughts the morning after.

On Sunday, Nov. 15, these students reported to school at 9 AM, to begin a day like none they had ever experienced. They brought nothing with them, but the clothes they were wearing. The morning was spent indoors, making sandwiches for that day's Bridges trip to Irvington and then meeting in the chapel for an introduction to the day. This included hearing from Simpson and Nancy, a couple who had lived on the streets for 7 years. They recently moved into an apartment in Staten Island. Their comments were eye-openers for the soon to be 'homeless' students. Even though many of them had been on several Bridges trips and had had conversations with homeless folks before, this was different. They were now feeling a little more intimidated by the experience ahead.

Around noon, they proceeded out to the track area of the campus, where they were told they might find some supplies to build shelters. (Br. Dan O'Riordan and parent Ed Kennedy had salvaged some "building materials" that they conveniently planted around the property). It was a warm day for mid-November, something that lulled the participants into thinking "maybe this won't be so bad after all." They did indeed find pieces of cardboard and old carpeting. They also found an old soccer ball and amused themselves by kicking it around. Eventually, however, a 'neighbor' (aka Mary Byrne Hoffman, senior religion teacher), took the ball and kicked them out of the 'park', saying, "We don't want people like you hanging around here." It was their first taste of the discrimination they would feel several times throughout the day and night.

Their soup kitchen meals were meager, their homes were vandalized, and some of their belongings were stolen. The soup kitchen was manned by RC President, Br. Owen Ormsby and RC board member, Kevin Mahoney. Owen and Kevin watered down the chicken soup at lunchtime and skimped on the ingredients for the



Marist Schools Newsletter

January 2010

evening meal of turkey and mashed potatoes. The 'homeless' folks were getting a little ornery by the time supper was over.

At 11:30 PM, the police (in the person of RC alumnus and Roselle police officer, Tom Nugent) came with lights flashing and kicked them out for trespassing, forcing them to move their tent city to a different location (in the quad by the labyrinth). By now, they were no longer thinking this was just a sleep out. They were hungry, cold and tired. Their shelters had to be moved to an area where the grass was soaking wet; temperatures had dropped significantly. Luckily, a bit earlier in the evening, a simulated RC Bridges trip had come by to distribute blankets and extra layers of clothing. They were gratefully received by the students who were usually on the giving end of that transaction.

And so, the comments about waiting for the light to come were the expression of pretty much all of their feelings. Br. Dan facilitated the debriefing in the chapel Monday morning, where the students talked about their fear, their hopelessness, their frustration, their boredom. And to a person, they expressed empathy for those who have to deal with this all the time. A life altering experience? Most definitely! These 16 then spoke eloquently at the school Thanksgiving prayer service that morning, and made quite an impression on their fellow students. In the days immediately following, donations of food and clothing spiked significantly.

In the Marist tradition, and with our Gospel call, we try to connect what we learn in the classroom, what we hear on retreats and in prayer services, with direct action. The Roselle Catholic community and those that we try to help benefitted greatly from the courage, persistence and determination of this small group of students. The impact will continue to be felt for quite a while.