

The MUSTANG MESSENGER

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Fall 2011

For Alumni, Parishioners, and Friends of St. Michael Parish School



First Day of School brings together students, parents, teachers, administrators

SMPS welcomes 365 students to 2011-12 school year

August 24 was an exciting day at St. Michael's as our 365 new and returning students made their way back to school for the start of the 2011-12 school year. There were smiles, hugs, and admittedly a few tears shed as parents said their goodbyes and took photos to mark the occasion. On hand to greet the students outside the school were Principal Sis Richardson and Vice Principal Lee Gruber.

This year, we are blessed with a diverse student body that represents a variety of areas in the Ohio Valley: Ohio, Marshall, Wetzel and Brooke Counties in WV; Belmont and Jefferson counties



Above Principal Sis Richardson welcomes sixth grader Allison Julian and (left) first grader Billy Hanasky to the first day of school.



in OH; as well as

Washington County in PA. We look forward to a productive, challenging year that incorporates meaningful stewardship projects, respect for one another, and continued growth in our Catholic faith.

"We are looking forward to a very rewarding school year as we welcome 50 new students and introduce many new opportunities for our children," said Richardson. "Let's continue to 'Work Hard, Play Hard and Pray Hard.'"



Above Chad Carter takes a photo of his sons Alex (1st grade) and Joey (3rd grade) in front of St. Michael's. Left, Vice Principal Lee Gruber greets Dr. David Gaphery and his son Chaz (5th grade).

St. Michael Parish School



Follow us on Facebook and Connect with Alumni!

facebook.com/The.Official.Site.of.SMPS

Follow Mustangs Athletics!

www.leaguelineup.com/stmikesmustangs for football, basketball, volleyball, cheering, tennis and track/field updates!

Join our Weekly SMPS E-Newsletter Mail List!

Contact: ahurley@stmikesparish.org to subscribe to our online publication.

2011-12 Statistics

- ◆ 365 Students (Preschool - Grade 8) representing 7 counties in WV, OH and PA.
- ◆ 240 School Families
- ◆ 34 Teachers/Aides/Staff Members (with 242 years of experience working at SMPS!)

Additional Services Offered

After-School Extended Care
Creative Play Group
Lil' Cherubs Program for Two-Year-Olds

Leave a Lasting Gift

Name SMPS in Your Will

Making legacy gifts to your favorite charities is easy. A simple directive in your will can bring welcome support to an organization or to a school like St. Michael's. Some people think you must choose between leaving a gift to family or a favorite charity; but in fact, you can do both. And, some charitable gifts may actually save your family money by decreasing inheritance taxes.

Whether you think of yourself rich or poor, or somewhere in between, your gift can make a difference! Even a small amount can have a big impact over time at St. Michael Parish School, helping us to advance our mission to "provide the on-going educational formation of all students in the context of Gospel values." If you are interested in naming St. Michael Parish School in your will, have your attorney use the following wording: "to The Most Rev. Michael J. Bransfield, Bishop of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston, or his successors in office, for the use of St. Michael Parish School (tax i.d. #55-0359761)."

Your gift to St. Michael Parish School will leave behind a proud legacy that will help so many kids.

The Mustang Messenger is published for the alumni, parishioners, and friends of St. Michael Parish School. Please direct all inquiries to:

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Angel Walk fundraiser to benefit school, establish scholarship fund

St. Michael Parish School will host, for the first time, the Angel Walk walk-a-thon bringing together students, teachers, parish priests, parents, alumni, and friends for a fun, fitness-focused event! Sponsored by Wheeling Jesuit University, the Angel Walk will be held at Wheeling Jesuit's performance track from 9 am to 11:30 am on Friday, Oct. 7. All of St. Michael's 365 students will walk the track for one hour (30 minutes for preschoolers) in an effort to raise money for the school through pledge sponsorships they receive from family, friends and neighbors.

Our fundraising goal for the Angel Walk is \$20,000, which will be used to enhance the school's academic programs and to keep tuition affordable for our school families. Additionally, a portion of the proceeds will be used to establish a new student scholarship fund in memory of Jackie Zavolta, a beloved parishioner and former kindergarten aide who recently lost her battle with cancer.

"We are very excited to establish the Angel Walk as a major fundraiser event for St. Michael Parish School," said Principal Sis Richardson. "It's a great way to bring together the entire school community to benefit the school and to promote health and well-being among the participants. We are so fortunate that Wheeling Jesuit University and our other corporate sponsors have chosen to support this event...we couldn't do it without them."

Richardson says the student scholarship will be presented to a kindergarten student in need for the 2012-13 academic year and will follow that child throughout his or her years at the school. "Establishing this student scholarship is our way of paying tribute to Jackie Zavolta and what she meant to this school and parish community," Richardson said. "She loved the kids, especially the kindergartners and we want her memory to live on by helping a child through this scholarship."

Anyone who wishes to contribute to the Zavolta Scholarship may do so by sending their donation to SMPS, c/o Zavolta Scholarship Fund, 1221 National Road, Wheeling, WV 26003.

St. Michael's invites everyone to get involved in the Angel Walk either by participating as a walker (\$10 fee for non-student walkers), sponsoring a student in their walking efforts, volunteering at the event, or sending in a gift in support of the Angel Walk or the Zavolta Scholarship Fund. Be sure to check our website and facebook page for updates and post-event photos!



With a portion of the Angel Walk's proceeds, St. Michael's will establish a student scholarship in memory of Jackie Zavolta (left), a beloved parishioner, friend, and former

SMPS kindergarten aide, who recently lost her battle with cancer. The scholarship will be presented to a Kindergarten student in need for the 2012-13 school year and will follow that child throughout his/her years at St. Michael's. For more information on this scholarship fund, please contact Principal Sis Richardson.

Alumni participate in SMPS 2011 Graduation Ceremony

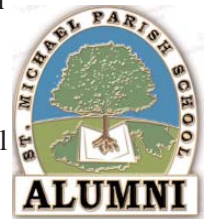


Larry Teufel ('61) presents the new SMPS alumni pin to son Billy during the 2011 8th Grade Graduation ceremony.

For the first time, alumni of St. Michael's were asked to participate in the 2011 eighth grade graduation at their alma mater, presenting a new alumni pin to the 32 graduates. The new pin (shown at right) would symbolize their transition from a St. Michael student (as much as an 11-year career for those who started in preschool) to now alumnus or alumna of our wonderful grade school.

It was a very special moment in the ceremony as 26 parents, siblings, relatives, friends, and teachers came forth to present and place the pin on the royal blue gown of the graduate before a packed church audience. Each alumni guest was also given a pin as a token of the school's appreciation at an alumni reception that preceded the graduation.

We thank those alumni who participated in this new St. Michael graduation tradition: Sister Judy Teufel ('53), Larry Teufel ('61), Gretchen Gundling Wilson ('65), Ted Gompers ('78), Jimmy Payne ('81), Shannon Magruder Bowman ('91), Jamie Bower ('92), Sean Decker ('93), Nicole Baller Avon ('94), Ashley Baller Kiger ('96), Michele Comercci Grant ('97), Heather Young Rine ('98), Brittney Baller Valentine ('98), Michael Hammond ('99), Danielle Payne Vavrock ('00), Andrew Hammond ('02), Stephanie Barry ('03), Michael Duplaga IV ('04), Jared Zelkowski ('07), Trey Griffith ('08), Kayla McLaughlin ('08), Jessica Allen ('09), Brian Felton ('09), Austin Grendel ('09), Aspen Matlock ('09), and Michael Pleva ('09).



ALUMNI NEWS...Where Are They Now?

Katie Christiansen earns National Board Certification



Katie (Wilson) Christiansen, SMPS Class of '94 recently earned National Board Certified Teacher (NBCT) status, having completed a rigorous work and exam schedule. National Board Certification is achieved through a performance-based assessment that typically takes one to three years to complete. NBCTs are nationally recognized as being among the best teachers in the profession, representing just three percent of the nation's teaching force. Katie is a graduate of Wheeling Central Catholic High School and Shepherd University (Shepherdstown, WV). Today, she works at Evergreen Mill Elementary School in Leesburg, VA. She and her husband Forrest and one-year-old daughter Scarlett reside in Leesburg.

Stephanie Elias lands internship with Disney Destinations

Stephanie Elias, SMPS Class of '01, is having the time of her life at one of the world's most popular destination...Disney World! Stephanie is a graduate of Wheeling Central Catholic High School and Wheeling Jesuit University. After earning her Bachelor's in May '09, she began work on her Master's degree from West Virginia University in hopes of narrowing down the marketing field she wished to pursue. Shortly after, she decided to apply for an internship to the company she says she was most interested in learning about -- Walt Disney Company. Three months after applying, Stephanie was hired and on her way from the snowy mountains of West Virginia to the sunny, palm tree-studded streets of Orlando, FL.

Because of her past work experience at Uniglobe Ohio Valley Travel (operated by her aunt and uncle Sally and Bill Bryson), Stephanie was chosen to intern in the Travel Industry Marketing Department of Disney Destinations in Celebrations, FL, which produces marketing materials to assist travel agents in selling Walt Disney World vacations. Her duties include communication support to internal partners and travel agency accounts, preparing presentations, compiling research, and uploading marketing materials. In her free time, she visits the Disney parks.

"A real benefit to working at Disney is having the opportunity to work in an environment that is so focused on customer service," Stefanie said. "It's great to work in an environment grounded in respect and partnership, where you know other people are always willing to help you do your best." She adds, "I joke sometimes that it will be tough to go back to the 'real world' in January 2012 when this year-long internship ends, but the truth is anyone can create happiness for others -- not just Disney. "





St. Michael Parish School
1221 National Road
Wheeling, WV 26003
Rooted in Faith...Committed to Excellence

Return Service Requested

SMPS Alumni...Share Your News With Us!

Since our founding in 1897, St. Michael Parish School has graduated hundreds of students. Our goal is to locate all past graduates so we can establish a strong Mustang Alumni Network that will enhance our school community. If you are a graduate and have not yet completed our "Alumni Information Request Form," please complete the form below and mail it back to SMPS, c/o Development Director Alyson Hurley. Be sure to keep in touch with SMPS by visiting our website at stmikesparishschool.org or our Facebook fanpage (facebook.com/The.Official.Site.of.SMPS). We want to hear from you!!

Full Name: _____ Maiden: _____

Yr of Graduation from SMPS: _____ High School Attended: _____

College/University Attended: _____

Highest Degree Earned (circle one): BA BS Master's Ph.D.

Professional Designations Earned: _____

Current Home Address: _____

Employer/Title: _____

Email: _____ Phone: _____

News you would like to share: _____

