



St. Mary's Messenger

A newsletter of St. Mary's Catholic School



A ministry of St. Mary of the Assumption Church

St. Mary's "Steps up to the Plate" for Charity

Here at St. Mary's School, one part of our mission is to nurture our students to become compassionate members of our community. We do this through our community service efforts, teaching children about our obligation to do for others. Our 8th grade students have learned this lesson well. Working closely with their Religion Teacher, Mr. Rucinski, the 8th graders organized a Faculty/Student softball game. The event was well attended by parents and grandparents, who watched the faculty and students go head to head on the field for the benefit of those in need. Proceeds from the event, totaling \$800.00, were donated to the Make a Wish Foundation and the Neil and Susan Golub Breast Care Center at Ellis Hospital equally.



Letter from the Principal

Dear Friends,

Shortly after the Waterford bus dropped students off this morning, I glanced out my office door, into the lobby, to see one of our 8th grade gentlemen carrying a book bag for a classmate who was making the best of a new set of crutches. Shortly afterward, as I walked down to the cafeteria for morning prayer and the lighting of the Advent wreath, I saw an 8th grade girl helping a third grade student with a poster that had fallen in the hallway. Some people would refer to these as “random acts of kindness”. But to say they are random means they are “without definite aim, purpose, or method”. This word makes it seem as though they were not intended when, in fact, they were. These two students knew exactly what they were doing and why they were doing it. They were taught to do the right thing!

At St. Mary’s, students learn more than New York State Department of Education prescribed standards. They learn the many lessons found in the Gospel. Teaching the Gospel and providing a faith filled learning environment makes a world of difference. It makes a difference in the way they treat each other and in the type of young men and women they become.

As we begin the season of Advent, I am reminded of the many things I have to be thankful for, not the least of which is being part of this St. Mary’s School community. I wish you all, parents, grandparents, friends and alumni, a very happy and healthy Christmas. May you and your family enjoy all the blessings our Lord can bestow upon you this holiday season, the greatest being love.

*Prayerfully yours,
Mary Rushkoski*

The Expanding Geography of St. Mary’s School

St. Mary’s School now attracts students from over seventeen different school districts. As St. Mary’s School continues to grow, the School is attracting more and more students from a larger geographic area. The convenient location of St. Mary’s School provides many benefits to families. St. Mary’s School is located near the end of I-787 and is convenient for parents and families who commute to the Albany area. St. Mary’s School is located at the gateway to Clifton Park, Halfmoon, Mechanicville, Stillwater, and many other surrounding communities. In addition, many families have reported that they like the fact that their child learns close to home. The convenient location complements the high academic standards and values based learning that make St. Mary’s stand apart from other schools.

Congratulations Mrs. Green!

Mrs. Mary Kate Green has been named the 2010 recipient of the Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton Distinguished Teacher Award, in this her 25th year of service to St. Mary’s Catholic School. This award honors a Catholic School teacher who has demonstrated excellence in teaching and has had a lasting impact on the moral development of her students. Mrs. Green has certainly done both! Mrs. Green was presented this award at the 2010 Catholic Schools Liturgy with Bishop Hubbard on Sunday, November 7th at St. Helen’s Church in Schenectady. Many members of our community to join us as we helped Mrs. Green celebrate this wonderful recognition and her accomplishments.

In the Classroom

Pre-K is prospering as the holiday season approaches. Students are enjoying the time with their seventh grade reading buddies.

Kindergarten will be performing the Christmas story as a gift to their families. The children will learn about the true meaning of Christmas through active participation in the play. Merry Christmas to all!

1st graders are working on their yearlong community service project raising money for "Food for the Poor". Our first collection was over \$150 therefore we will be purchasing 100 chicks for hungry people in foreign countries.

2nd graders are participating in many community service projects. In November, they donated cookies to the Little Sisters of the Poor. For Advent, they are collecting toys for less fortunate children via the F.B. Peck Hose Toy Drive, as well as making Christmas cards for our veterans in local nursing homes and hospitals. These students are truly thinking of others as we celebrate this beautiful season of Christmas.

3rd has started our book club. They are reading a variety of chapter books and discussing the storyline and plot. Together they will complete activities and have in depth discussions about the themes and ideas that are evident the stories.

4th graders, who are learning about the Dutch and English history of New York State, will be designing their own city or farm/manor that they might have lived in if they were a colonist during this time. They will make sure that their design is an accurate portrayal of city life or farm life during that time. Students will also have a chance to sample some Dutch and English foods that were brought over from those countries that have influenced our culture today.

5th graders dissected owl pellets to learn about what owls eat and how owls digest their food. While examining the pellets, the students separated the bones from the fur in order to identify the bones using a bone chart. The students discovered shrew, mouse, rat and mole bones. First grade students were invited to the Science lab to watch the Fifth graders during this dissection process.

Middle School science students are taking the message that "Our Earth is a gift from God" to heart. Following up on an Earth Day 2010 commitment to be environmentally educated citizens of the world, the students have invited two guest lecturers into their classes to speak on the topics of New York State's wetlands and the responsible use of nuclear energy.

Get **Linked in** with St. Mary's School

The web presence of St. Mary's School has increased again with the addition of a professional networking group on the web site LinkedIn. Parents, faculty, alumni, community, and business professionals can become part of this professional network. Current and new members of LinkedIn can simply go to the Group Directory and search for St. Mary's School of Waterford. St. Mary's School continues to be an innovator with electronic and social media, using the web, email, Facebook, and now LinkedIn to keep as many constituents informed about all of the exciting events and activities happening at the School.



Another Festive Feast!

The October Feast was a great success and loads of fun for everyone who attended. Our hard working teachers volunteered their time on Friday night to come and serve Chef Tony's famous meatballs and ziti to many members of the St. Mary's family. A big thank goes out to all of our teacher and parents who put the dinner together and all the families that came to eat in or take out!

Volunteers Welcomed with Open Arms

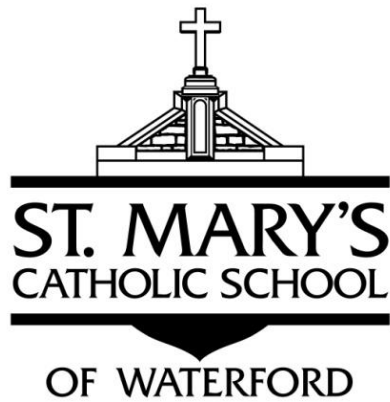
St. Mary's welcomes all families with open arms and offers many volunteer opportunities for those families to be involved with their children's education. The volunteers at St. Mary's are not only welcome, but serve an important role in the day to day operation of the school. The volunteer positions are, to name a few, recess monitors, lunch prep, lunch service, grade parent, school banking, library, fundraising and activity committees. This vast array of opportunities allows members of the school community to offer their services at their convenience; whether it is during the day, evening, or on the weekend.

All members of our St. Mary's family are encouraged to volunteer including parents, grandparents, etc. Families can rest assured that every volunteer is subject to a background check and Roman Catholic Diocese Virtus Training prior to volunteering at the school.

Currently St. Mary's is blessed with over **90 volunteers** offering their time and energy in some capacity, which is up from past school years. So if you are searching for a school that welcomes you with open arms St. Mary's is the school for you.

Running Towards the Future!

This past spring, St. Mary's School held its 3rd Annual "Sprint for St. Mary's". This event is a fundraiser for our technology program as well as a way to promote fitness and exercise among our students. Students gather pledges from friends and family, many of whom cheer them on as the race at the Waterford Halfmoon School track. The event generated over \$11,000, all of which was used to purchase new Smart Boards® for our classrooms. With 5 Smart Boards in various classrooms, Kindergarten through middle school, students at all grade levels have the opportunity to use this 'hands-on' technology. This is just another example of the many ways St. Mary's prepares its students for the future.



12 Sixth Street
Waterford, New York 12188
(518)237-0652

www.smswaterford.org

Job Well Done!

St. Mary's students, Kindergarten through 8th grade gathered together on the evening of December 2nd to put on their annual Christmas Concert and Pageant. They've been practicing for months and all their hard work paid off. It was a beautiful event!

